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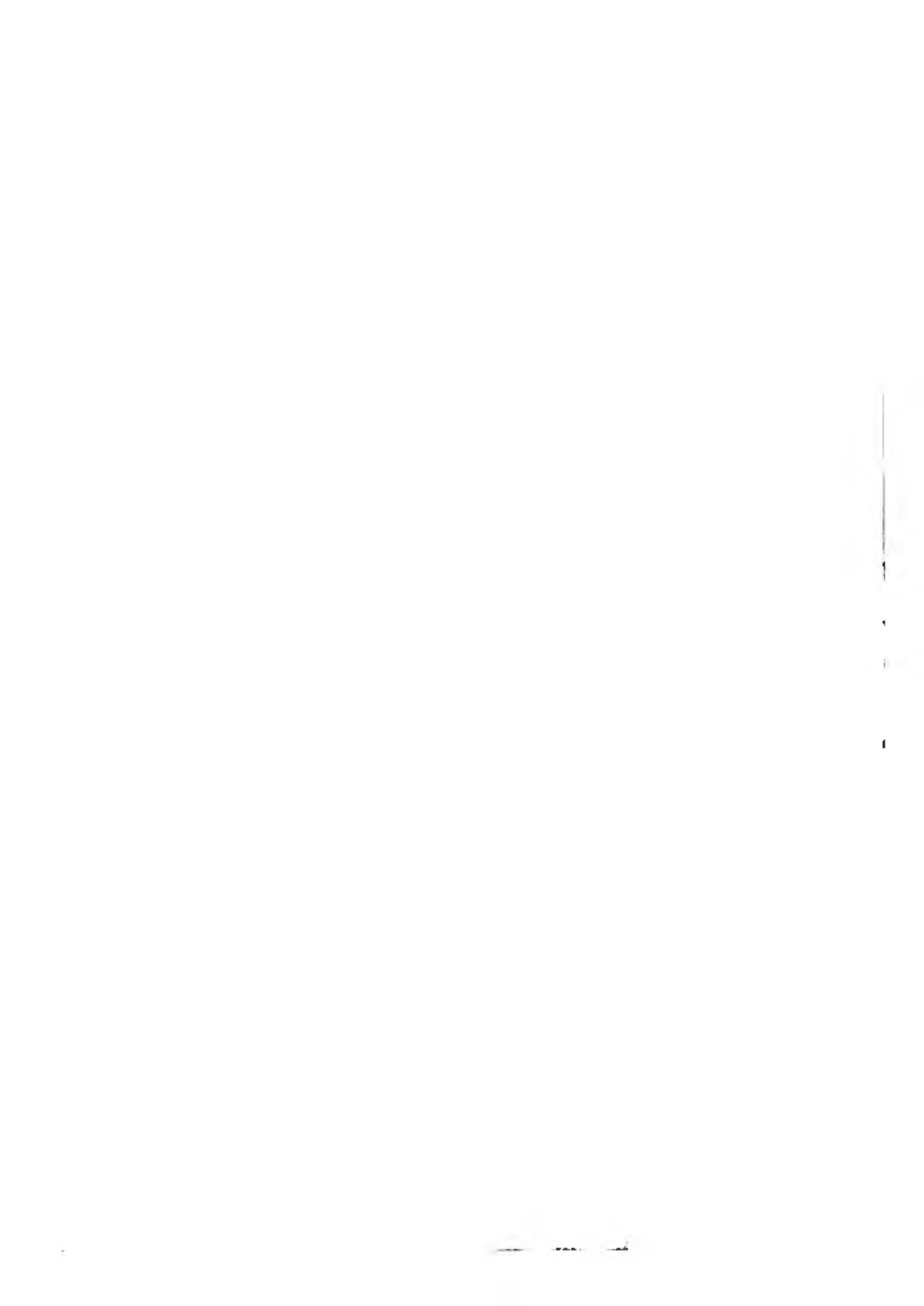














MANUALS OF  
*RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.*

EDITED BY  
J. P. NORRIS, D.D.

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THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE CATECHISM AND PRAYER  
BOOK.















have also been inserted of the journeys of our Lord and of the Apostle St. Paul; and a number of fresh notes have been added.

If the Manual should prove of any assistance to English readers of the New Testament, in helping them to a clearer insight into the office and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, its purpose will have been fully answered.

E. I. G.

ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1883.



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*The Revelation of St. John* is quite distinct from any of these. In the New Testament there are—

1. **Five Historical Books** or narratives, viz. the *Four Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles*.

2. **Twenty-one Epistles**, or letters of apostolic men.

3. **The Revelation of St. John**, the one great prophetic book of the New Testament. A book by which the Holy Spirit has made known to the Church things to come.

These books the Church has received and treasured from the earliest times as inspired, and has bound them up in one volume called the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**The Gospels** are four separate narratives, each containing a selection of the words and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and, taken together, they give us a very complete account of all that is important to be known about His life on earth and His teaching.

In our own day there is the lecture, which notices only the most remarkable actions and words of some great man ; and there is the complete biography. Now, the Gospels resemble the first of these—the lecture rather than the life ; for they are sketches of the most striking incidents of our Lord's sojourn upon earth ; not always, however, in the exact order in which they happened, but grouped together so as to bring Him most clearly before us as Preacher, Worker of miracles, the Lord of life and death, the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, the persecuted and suffering Messiah—at one time commanding His disciples and founding a kingdom, at another rebuking the religious teachers of the Jewish people, or restraining the power of the Wicked One.







The first Evangelist portrays our Lord more especially as the Messiah of the Jews, the second as the Servant of God, and the Almighty Son of God, the third as the Redeemer of all men, and the fourth as the only-begotten Son of God, the true Light of the world. St. Matthew's Gospel may be called the Gospel of the Kingdom, St. Mark's the Gospel of the Ministry, St. Luke's the Gospel of the Atonement, and St. John's the Gospel of Doctrine.

In this way one narrative throws light upon another, and, taken together, they form one "four-sided Gospel," instructive alike by its unity and diversity.

"Gospel" means "good news." These books are so called because they convey to us the best news that was ever made known to men—the tidings of their redemption or deliverance from the Evil One. To the believing Jews the Gospel was the good news that the hope of their fathers had been fulfilled. And what was that hope? When our first parents sinned, God promised them a Deliverer—a Saviour (Gen. iii. 15). He made the same promise to the patriarchs—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and to His chosen people the Israelites. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Saviour—the promised Messiah (the Anointed One—the Christ), sometimes as a great king (Psa. ii. 6, xlv. 3, 4, etc.), sometimes as a man of sorrows, as a sufferer, and as a sinbearer (Isa. liii. 3–6). This promised Messiah was, then, the hope of the Jews; and the Gospel was to them the "good news" that their hope had been fulfilled—that the Messiah had come.

The world waited long for the promised Saviour, but, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman (Gal. iv. 4). It







## CHAPTER II.

### The Gospel according to St. Matthew.

ST. MATTHEW—CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS GOSPEL—  
LINEAGE AND BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST—VISIT  
OF THE MAGI—FLIGHT INTO EGYPT—LIFE AT  
NAZARETH.

**ST. MATTHEW** was one of the twelve Apostles. Before his call to be a follower of Jesus Christ, he was a publican or tax-gatherer at Capernaum, in the employ probably, not of the Romans, but of Herod Antipas, in whose tetrarchy Capernaum was. He is called "Levi" by St. Mark and St. Luke. It is probable that he changed his name to Matthew, the "Gift of God," on his call to the new and higher life.

Before bidding farewell to his old calling and associates, St. Matthew, wealthy perhaps in the estimation of his fellow townsmen, made a feast in honour of his new Master.

He designates himself, in all humility, as "Matthew the Publican," and his name occurs always in the second group of the three groups of four each into which the lists of the Apostles may be divided."<sup>1</sup>

These scanty details are all that we know of the Evangelist from the New Testament. They suggest

<sup>1</sup> We have four such lists in Matt. x. 2-4; Mark iii. 16-19; Luke vi. 14-16; Acts i. 13. "Apostle" means missionary, messenger, one sent forth.







Then St. Matthew, guided always by the Holy Spirit, draws a number of outlines or sketches of the life and teaching of Jesus. What do we see in his first picture? A village carpenter (though he had kings for his forefathers)—a humble maiden (but also of royal descent)—a few cottages, a hamlet or village, hidden away amongst the hills of Galilee.<sup>1</sup> At Nazareth—for that is the name of the village—Joseph and Mary lived between 1800 and 1900 years ago. Mary is betrothed to Joseph, but not yet married to him, and by-and-by Joseph is in trouble; for Mary, he believes, has not been true to him. But while he thinks about it, an Angel of the Lord tells him to take Mary to be his wife; for a miracle has been wrought, and her first-born Son, Whom he is to call JESUS (God the Saviour), will be, not his son, nor the son of any other man, but none other than the Son of God Himself; and at Bethlehem,<sup>2</sup> David's city—whither Joseph and Mary have gone—the Son of Mary, the Son of God, was born into this world, in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Herod the Great, King of the Jews—Augustus Cæsar being at that time Emperor of Rome.

**Visit of the Magi** (ii. 1–12). A few weeks after the birth of Jesus, wise men<sup>3</sup> came from some country in the far East to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him.” No

<sup>1</sup> The most northerly division of the Holy Land in the time of our Lord.

<sup>2</sup> “The House of Bread,” some five miles south of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Literally “Magi,” belonging to a religious caste or sect, widely spread throughout a large part of Arabia and Persia. They probably knew something of Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah. They studied the motions of the stars, and worshipped the heavenly bodies.



— — — — —



Child and His mother back to their own land. Out of Egypt God had called His Son, fulfilling the words of the Prophet Hosea.<sup>1</sup> But when Joseph heard that Archelaus, a son of Herod, reigned in Judæa, he was afraid to live in Bethlehem ; and so,<sup>2</sup> being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into Galilee—to his old home, Nazareth.

This story of the visit of the Magi—the flight into Egypt—the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem—and the return from Egypt—is to be found in St. Matthew's Gospel only ; but St. Matthew tells us nothing more of the infancy of Jesus, nothing of His youthful days at Nazareth, nothing of His early manhood : for to gratify our curiosity or to amuse our fancy is not the purpose of his Gospel.

**The Baptism of Jesus Christ** (Matt. iii.). Thirty years have passed since Mary and Joseph, with the infant Jesus, went to live in Nazareth. In the interval, Judæa has become a Roman province, of which Pontius Pilate is the governor. We have now another of St. Matthew's pictures before us. The scene is in the wilderness of Judæa,<sup>3</sup> on the banks of the Jordan. Crowds of people are there from Jerusalem and from places far and near, for they have heard that God has once more sent a prophet to His people, and there, on the banks of the river, stands a man clothed like Elijah in the prophet's mantle of camel's hair. He is calling on men to repent, and baptizing them in Jordan as they confess their sins.

<sup>1</sup> Hosea xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Leaving out the word "notwithstanding," which is not in the Greek text, and is wrongly introduced into the English translation of 1611.

<sup>3</sup> Extending on the western side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea from Jericho to Engedi.







Father's will, and He resisted the temptation. But doubtless it was a most real temptation. When we read of His being on the mountain-top or on a pinnacle of the Temple, it was probably "in the Spirit." So St. John (Rev. i. 10, iv. 1, 2, xviii. 3) seemed to himself to be lifted into heaven, though bodily he was in the Isle of Patmos all the time.

This may help us to understand, in some small part, the mysterious narrative of these temptations of our Lord in the wilderness.



### *CHAPTER III.*

#### **The Galilean Ministry.**

**JESUS IN GALILEE—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT  
—THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL  
KINGDOM.**

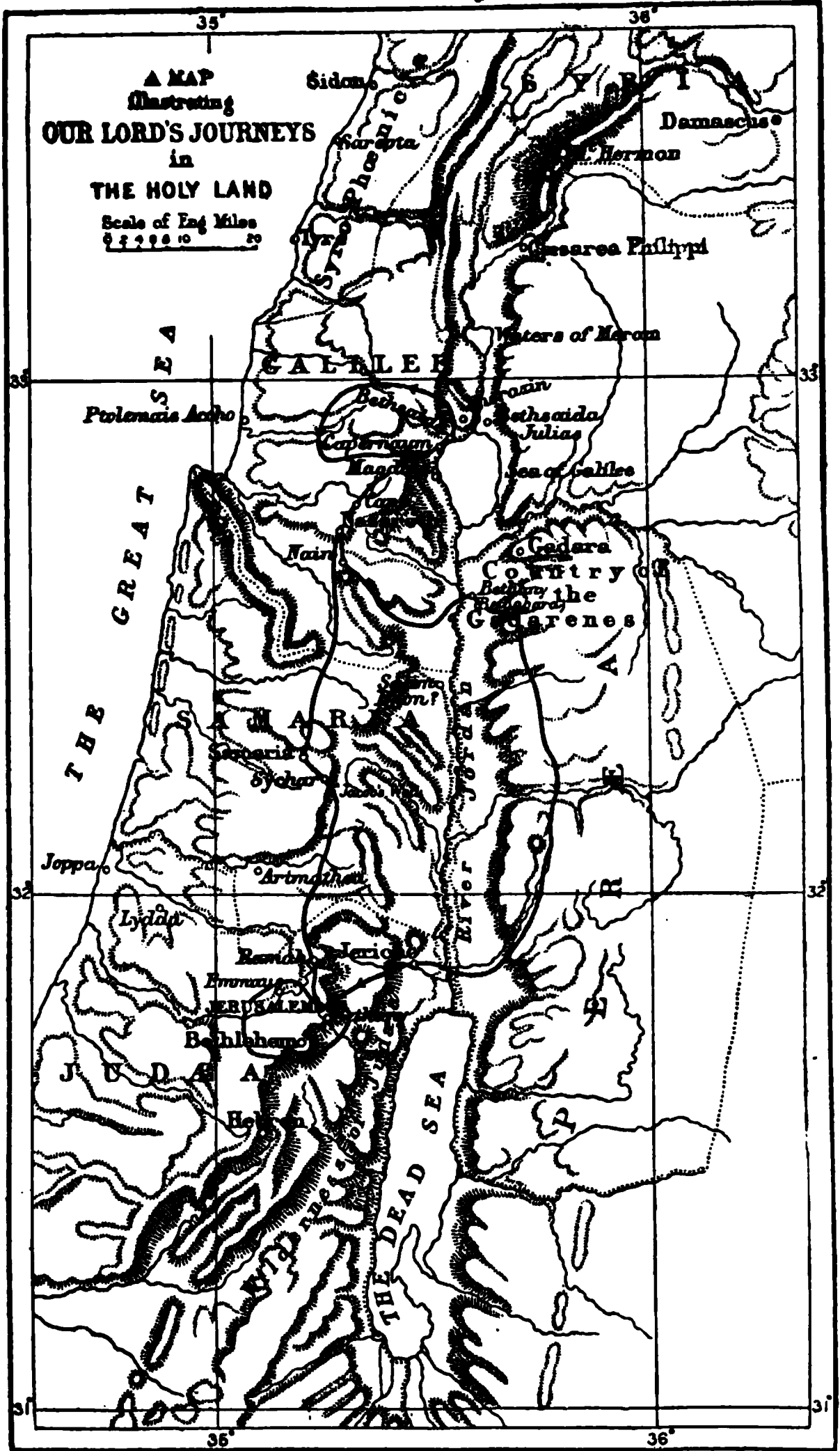
**T**HE nine or ten months which followed the Baptism are passed over in silence by St. Matthew. At the close of that time our Lord returned to Galilee. There, far away from the proud teachers of Jerusalem, He began, as St. Matthew tells us, His Galilean ministry, preaching everywhere and saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17).

And Jesus went through all Galilee teaching in the synagogues,<sup>1</sup> "and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people." Everywhere and in all places—in the busy towns, in the lonely villages, in the houses of prayer, in the homes of rich and poor—He made known the same good news: "the Gospel of the Kingdom." Never before had such a Teacher been heard, never before had such a Physician of souls and bodies walked through their streets. Everywhere the people wondered, and said that a mighty prophet was amongst them: "and they brought

<sup>1</sup> These buildings were common throughout Palestine in the time of our Lord. They were used for prayer and for reading and exposition of the Law, but not for sacrifices.



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When the old Law was given from Sinai how terrible was the sight ! The mount quaked greatly ; there were thunderings and lightnings, the noise of a trumpet and a thick darkness, out of which shone the awful Majesty of God, so that the people stood afar off (see Exod. xix. and xx.) ; but the new Law of Christ's spiritual kingdom is spoken in gentle words *by the same Lord*—now clothed in human flesh and sitting as a man amongst men—whose glory on Sinai was “like a devouring fire.”

Hear what He says :—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peace-makers : for they shall be called the children of God.”

Here is a description of the sort of men whom Jesus wished to admit into His heavenly kingdom—that is, His Church.

His Church is to shine as a light in the world—a light borrowed from Himself. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” “Ye are the light of the world.” “Be ye perfect” (how high the aim !) “even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect.” Here, however, “perfect” means *complete* in every part, rather than without spot of sin ; it means, “Leave out no part of the copy God sets you.”







## NOTE

## On Matt. v.-vii.

*One jot or one tittle* (v. 18). "Jot," the smallest of the Hebrew letters. "Tittle," a point or little mark by which to know one letter from another.

*Raca* (v. 22). Worthless vain fellow. A name of contempt.

*Adversary* (v. 25) means creditor.

*If thy right eye offend thee* (make thee to stumble), pluck it out; and if thy right hand offend thee; cut it off, etc. (vv. 29, 30). We are to give up what we value most if it lead us into sin.

*Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay* (v. 37). This doubling the word, to add force to it, as was customary amongst the Jews, is to suffice without an oath, which Christ entirely condemns.

*Compel thee* (v. 41). The Romans obliged the Jews to give their services to the government in sending forward messages or men. Our Lord would say, "If you are compelled to go a mile, go cheerfully."

*Alms* (vi. 1); better "righteousness," as in R. V. Then of this righteousness our Lord gives three examples—alms, prayer, fasting.

*Mote, beam* (vii. 3); "mote" is the little speck of dust floating in the air; "beam" is a large balk of timber.



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unclean !” as he hastens through the throng ? Who is he, indeed, but a leper—an outcast, the most miserable of men : for a disease has seized hold upon him that will eat away his body, and cause his limbs to drop off while he is still alive. No man can cure him or help him. The people fly from him lest he should pollute them ; but he heeds them not, for he sees before him the famous Prophet of Galilee, the fame of Whose mighty deeds has filled the land. Ah, will *He* spurn the leper ? or will He pity him ? The poor man knew not, but hastened on through the crowd, and, pressing forward to the very feet of Jesus, threw himself on the ground, exclaiming, “ Lord, if Thou *wilt*, Thou *canst* make me clean ! ” And Jesus ? Did He, too, shrink from the contact, and tell His disciples to take him away ! No. He “ put forth His hand and *touched* him, saying, I will ; be thou clean ! ” And *immediately* his leprosy was cleansed. Wonderful change ! the diseased flesh became as the flesh of a little child. Neither spot nor taint remains. But let us mark well that leprosy of the body is a picture of sin destroying the soul, and the miracle teaches us that to the cry of the penitent—“ Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean ”—the same Lord is ever ready to return the same answer of peace—“ I will ; be thou clean.’

**The Centurion’s Servant healed** (viii. 5-13). But Gentiles (foreigners) as well as Jews came to Jesus in their distress. As He entered Capernaum, a centurion<sup>1</sup> prayed Him to heal his servant, and the Lord’s ready answer was, “ I will come and heal him.”

<sup>1</sup> An officer in the Roman army, corresponding to our captain. His command consisted of a century, or centuria (*i.e.* of 100 men), the sixtieth part of a Roman legion or regiment.



But the man said, "Lord, speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed: for I am a man under authority—I have to obey those I serve—yet I command my soldiers, and they do as I bid them. How much more wilt Thou, the Lord of all, be obeyed." And the Lord marvelled at the man's faith, which was greater than He had found in Israel. Then Jesus prophesied of the calling of the Gentiles into His Church, while the unbelieving Jews, the children of the kingdom—the old kingdom of God's chosen people—will be cast out.

**The Storm on the Lake** (viii. 23-27). The wonderful miracles of the Lord caused great multitudes to follow Him<sup>1</sup> (viii. 14-22), and to escape from them for a time, He entered into a ship with His disciples, to cross over to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Then we read of the sudden storm<sup>2</sup>—how Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves—of the "*great calm*." For He Who in the beginning created the heaven and the earth spoke to them and they were *still*.

**The Gadarene Demoniacs** (viii. 28-34). On the lake Jesus showed His power as the Lord of nature; and now, on its eastern side, in the country of the Gadarenes,<sup>3</sup> He delivered the demoniacs from the power of Satan, whose kingdom He had come to destroy. In the maddened swine the redeemed man saw the destructiveness of the Power from which he had been delivered. One mighty to save had now come to this people, but their swine were dearer to them than the

<sup>1</sup> Two are specially recorded as having volunteered to be Christ's disciples.

<sup>2</sup> One of those terrible squalls to which the Sea of Galilee is so liable. They arise in part from the great depression of the lake below the level of the Mediterranean, and in part from the deep gorges and ravines acting like funnels "in drawing the wind from the mountains."

<sup>3</sup> This is the correct reading, not Gergesenes.



presence of the Holy One, and they besought Him to depart ; and Jesus, Who never forces men's wills, took them at their word, and crossed over again to His own city, Capernaum.

**The Paralytic healed** (ix. 1-8). Here they bring Him a man sick of the palsy—a paralytic—lying upon a bed,<sup>1</sup> hoping that the Lord will heal him.

Now, the eyes of the Lord are ever fixed on sin as the great disease of man, and so, thinking more of the sickness of this man's soul than of the ailments of his body, and knowing doubtless his penitence of heart and spiritual longings, as well as the faith of those who brought him, Jesus said to him, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" and when the Scribes<sup>2</sup> called this blasphemy, Jesus healed the paralytic, and asked, "Whether it is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk"? Thus he proved that the "Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins." And "the people glorified God, Which had given such power unto men."

**The Call of St. Matthew** (ix. 9-13). Matthew the Publican was called by Jesus to follow Him ; and straightway he left his office, the receipt of customs at Capernaum, for the high calling of an Apostle of the Lord. Jesus further offended the Pharisees by eating at Matthew's house with publicans and sinners ; but He told them that He had come to call sinners and not the self-righteous to repentance : "for they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

<sup>1</sup> The bed was merely a pallet or mat. Cf. Mark vi. 55 ; John v. 8, 12 ; Acts v. 15, ix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Men skilled in teaching and explaining the Law. They had, however, in our Lord's time, overlaid the sacred Scriptures with a network of tradition.







the devil from the dumb man, are the last in the wonderful procession of miracles that pass so rapidly before us in the eighth and ninth chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. In these miracles we see that a man's faith is the measure of what he can receive from God : "according to your faith be it unto you," even as in His own country Jesus did not many mighty works "because of their unbelief."<sup>1</sup> But we see, also, in the case of the Ruler's daughter and of the paralytic, that our Lord in His great mercy sometimes accepted the faith of others on behalf of those who were dear to them.

Again, these miracles—these interruptions of the ordinary course of nature—were signs that the Doer of them was the Lord of nature ; even He Who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. The Apostles worked miracles, and most notable ones, as we read in the Acts, but they did them always in the Name and by the power of their Divine Master.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord, on the contrary, worked all His miracles by His own almighty power.

Another thing to be noted is the unwearied kindness and tenderness of the Lord to the sad and sorrowful—His ready help to the sufferer and the outcast.

"How to all the sick and tearful  
Help was ever gladly shown ;  
How He sought the poor and fearful,  
Called them brothers and His own.

"How no contrite soul e'er sought Him,  
And was bidden to depart ;  
How with gentle words He taught him,  
Took the death from out his heart.

LUIS HENSEL.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> See Acts iii. 6, 12 ; iv. 10, etc.



## NOTE

**On Christ's Answer to the Volunteer Disciples.**

"*The foxes have holes,*" etc. (viii. 20). In this answer (as in every answer that He made) Jesus spoke as one who knew the heart; most likely this Scribe wished to follow the Lord for some selfish reason; he would now learn that if he followed Him it must be in poverty and humility.

"*Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead*" (viii. 22). Is this a stern command? Does it seem harsh? It is meant to be a rebuke, being addressed to one who is ready to make excuses for not giving himself up to the work to which he was called. Jesus would say, "Let those who are spiritually dead attend to this matter. You are called to a higher and holier work; attend to that before all else. 'Follow Me.'"



## CHAPTER V.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE—CHRIST'S CHARGE  
TO THEM—ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE—  
THE DOOM OF THE CITIES OF THE LAKE.

**I**N studying St. Matthew's Gospel it should be remembered that he does not always put things one after another "in order" just as they happened. In telling us (viii. and ix.) of Christ's wonderful miracles he takes a number that were done, possibly at various times, and groups them together. So, in chapter x. he gives us our Lord's instruction to His Apostles. In chapter xiii. we have a group of parables ; while, in the 24th and 25th chapters we are told of terrible things to come—God's judgments on the Jews and the world—Christ's Second Advent in Glory—the day of judgment.

**Mission of the Twelve** (x. 1-42). Jesus had already chosen twelve disciples (learners under discipline) to be always with Him, and in the tenth chapter of his Gospel, St. Matthew tells us their names, and how Christ sent them forth as His Apostles, and "commanded them." He told them where to go, what to do, and how to do it.







**A MAP  
illustrating  
OUR LORD'S JOURNEYS  
in  
THE HOLY LAND**

A MAP illustrating  
OUR LORD'S JOURNEYS  
in  
THE HOLY LAND

Scale of Eng Miles  
0 2 4 6 8 10 20

THE GREAT SEA

THE DEAD SEA

JORDAN RIVER

Galilee

Samaria

Judaea

Sidon

Tyre

Damascus

Caesarea Philippi

Tiberias

Bethsaida

Capernaum

Magdala

Nain

Gadara

Jericho

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

Hebron

Sea of Galilee

Waters of Merom

Country of the Gadarenes

Lydda

Joppa

Arimathea

Ramatha

Emmaus

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

Hebron

WILDERNESS



that you give them up—that “God rejects those who reject Him.”<sup>1</sup>

*Councils* (ver. 17); courts of law.

“*Take no thought*” (ver. 19) ; or rather “Be not anxious,” as in Revised Version.

“*Till the Son of Man be come*” (ver. 23) ; to punish the Jews and to destroy Jerusalem—a shadow of Christ's coming a second time in glory.

“*Beelzebub* ;” probably the same as Baal-zebub (2 Kings i. 2), a false god worshipped by the Philistines. The Jews gave the name to Satan.

“*Fear Him*” (ver. 28) ; that is, fear to offend God. Fear Him, not with the dread of a slave, but with the awe which a son feels towards a father whom he knows he has offended.

*Hell*: here “Gehenna,” the place of punishment : sometimes (as in Matt. xi. 23, see Revised Version) “Hell” is the translation of “Hades,” the place of departed spirits.

“*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth*” (ver. 34) ; that is, not an *outward* peace. “The peace of God” is to keep our *hearts* and *minds*.

“*A sword*” (ver. 34) ; the sword of the persecutor.

“*To set a man at variance*” (ver. 35) ; see ver. 21. The “variance” is caused by the haters of Christ and not by His followers.

“*He that findeth his life*” (ver. 39). He who loves the present life too much to risk it for Christ will lose eternal life ; but he who cares not for his present life, so that he may win Christ, will have life eternal.

**The Message of John the Baptist** (ix. 1-15).

<sup>1</sup> This significant expression refers to the custom of shaking off the dust of Gentile countries as practised by the Israelite on returning to his own land. Cf. Acts xiii. 51.



Whilst the Twelve were executing their first mission, Jesus Christ seems to have made a preaching tour alone. During the course of it, He received a message from John the Baptist. Wearied with his prison life, discouraged and sad, the faith of the Baptist for a moment wavered. "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" was the question which he instructed his disciples to ask. He longed for some message of comfort. And he received it. The disciples were told by our Lord to return to their master, and to tell him all the wonderful things they had seen. There was no need to doubt, or even to waver for a moment. True, there was to be no deliverance from prison; the Baptist must patiently endure till the end should come. But he was not forgotten. The eye of the Master was upon him. Of that he might rest assured. This is what the Lord's answer meant. We may be sure St. John so understood it, and found that in coming to the Messiah for a solution of all his fears, and for comfort in his sorrow, his soul had been "refreshed."

When the messengers of the Baptist had departed, our Lord spoke to the crowd around Him as to their idea of John and his work. He was a prophet: this the people had thought, and they were right. But he was in reality more than this, because he had not only been able to point out the Messiah to men, but was himself the friend of the Bridegroom.<sup>1</sup> As the herald of Christ, and His immediate forerunner, John was greater than all the prophets who had preceded him. Yet the humblest Christian, as a member of Jesus Christ, and as belonging, therefore, to the Kingdom of Heaven—by which expression our Lord means His Church on earth—is greater than the Baptist.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 29.



Jesus Christ went on to say that ever since John the Baptist had begun to preach, the Kingdom of Heaven had "suffered violence, and the violent were taking it by force." Comparing these words with the parallel passage in St. Luke,<sup>1</sup> we see that our Lord meant that the Kingdom of Heaven had come in His Person, and that the multitudes who thronged His path, and listened to His teaching were pressing into the Kingdom, notwithstanding the opposition of their rulers, the Scribes and Pharisees.

**Rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees** (xi. 16-19). Turning, then, from the general crowd, Christ addressed in particular "the Pharisees and lawyers,"<sup>2</sup> and reminded them that they had rejected the truth, whether offered them by John, with his life of austerity and fasting, or by Himself, who refused not to join in their social gatherings, and the festivities of their family life. Whilst, however, they would not receive the teaching either of the Son of Man, or of His great forerunner, all true seekers after God, all the children of wisdom, were able, and would always be able, to recognize and acknowledge the Divine Wisdom, whether speaking to them in the severity of a Baptist's life in the wilderness, or in the gentleness and meekness of Christ, the Guest of publicans and sinners.

**The Unrepentant Cities** (xi. 20-24). With this record of the rejection of the Baptist and our Lord by the Scribes and Pharisees, St. Matthew, according to his plan, groups the words in which our Lord spoke of His rejection by Capernaum and its neighbour cities, and solemnly took His final leave of them. This He did not do, as we learn from St. Luke, for some time after, when He was starting on His last journey from Galilee

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See Luke vii. 30.



to Jerusalem. Here, in these busy and prosperous towns of Galilee, most of Jesus Christ's mighty works had been done. They had been specially favoured, "exalted to heaven," by the presence of the Redeemer, yet they had not repented. They should become as dead; their ruins should be hidden, as dead bodies are hidden, by the graves in which they are buried; they should be "brought down to hell."<sup>1</sup> And what, indeed, have these cities been for centuries, but heaps of rubbish, so that even now their exact localities are disputed.

**The Revelation to "Babes"** (xi. 25-30). In striking contrast to the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees and the cities, St. Matthew places the revelation of Divine truth which it had pleased God to give to the humble followers of His Son. "The simple faith of the poor people who crowded round Him" deeply affected our Blessed Lord. It caused Him, as we gather from St. Luke, "to rejoice in spirit." To them, therefore, it is that He gives His gracious invitation, and His promise of refreshment and rest.

Yet even amidst the loving hearts of His disciples Jesus Christ was alone. There were depths in His Spirit which they could not follow. The human sympathy, for which as man He seems to have yearned, could not be His. "No man knoweth the Son," He said. Yet He was not alone, for the Father was with Him. The two apostles, St. Matthew and St. John, from whose Gospels we quote these words, had sat, it is evident, at the feet of the same Master, and learnt of the same Divine Teacher.

<sup>1</sup> In the Revised Version, the original word, "Hades," is retained, untranslated.



## NOTE

## On the Names of the Apostles.

*Bartholomew*, or Bar-Tolmai, means "the Son of Tolmai." He is supposed to be the same person as the Nathanael of St. John's Gospel, St. Philip's friend.

*James, the son of Alphæus*, was also called James the Less (or the Little), from his small stature, as well as to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee.

*Lebbæus or Thaddæus*. This Apostle is believed to be the same as "Judas, the brother of James," of St. Luke's Gospel. He is also a son of Alphæus.

*Simon the Canaanite*, or Cananæan, in Greek *Zelotes*, so called, perhaps, because he may at one time have belonged to the Zealots. This sect was possessed by a fierce desire for independence, and maintained payment of tribute to the Roman or any foreign government to be a violation of the principle that God only was the King of Israel ; but they made these principles the pretext for great violence, and they degenerated into lawless brigands.

*Iscaiot* means a man of Kerioth, a village in the tribe of Judah, and probably the native place of the traitor.



## CHAPTER VI.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

THE SABBATH—THE PHARISEES—TEACHING BY  
PARABLES.

**THE Observance of the Sabbath: The Ears of Corn** (xii. 1-13). In the first verse of the twelfth chapter of his Gospel, St. Matthew relates something that happened early in the second year of our Lord's ministry. In Palestine, a country of fertile plains and corn fields, the barley harvest began on the second day of the Passover—early in April. There is a field of golden grain ripe for the sickle, and men are walking through it slowly and wearily, and as they pass along they pluck the ears of wheat, rubbing out the grains in their hands, and eating them to satisfy their hunger. They are not clothed in soft raiment, for they do not live in those fine houses that may be seen at Capernaum and Tiberias. They are homely-looking men ; but one amongst them looks graver, sadder, and more earnest than the rest. They have been teaching the people who follow them, and have had no time so much as to eat. Who are these men? Who but Jesus of Nazareth, the great Prophet and Teacher of Galilee, and His disciples? But besides the people who follow them, others are watching to see what



they will do. These are the Pharisees, a powerful religious sect amongst the Jews. They also were teachers of the people ; and now they press forward to speak to Jesus. Do they come to thank Him for His kindness to the people ? for His miracles of mercy and labours of love ? Hear what they say : " Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day."

For a long time after the Israelites—or Jews<sup>1</sup> as they were afterwards called—came into the Holy Land, they were constantly worshipping idols, profaning the Sabbath, and provoking God to anger, until at last He caused them to be carried away by the kings of Assyria and the king of Babylon. After they returned from Babylon, the Jews never again worshipped idols, nor did they profane the Sabbath ; but the Pharisees overlaid the Mosaic regulations for its observance with their own laws and teachings.

We saw from our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, how they kept the *letter* of the law, but knew nothing about its spirit. True in respect to the other commandments, it was equally so in regard to the fourth. God meant the Sabbath to be a means of good to men ; but the Pharisees thought more of the day than of men for whose good it was ordained. With them it was " not lawful " to do good on the Sabbath. They made the blessed rest of the seventh day a weariness, a burden, and a cruel bondage. They forbade any one to pluck an ear of corn on the Sabbath—that would be a kind of harvest work. Nor might shoes with nails be worn—as nails were a burden, and carrying a burden was

<sup>1</sup> The name " Jew " was applied originally to the inhabitants of Judæa only, but after the Babylonian captivity it came to be used of all Israelites.



## CHAPTER VI.

### The Galilean Ministry

(Continued).

THE SABBATH—THE PHARISEES—THE  
PARABLES.

**THE** Observance of the Sabbath  
of Corn (xii. 1-13). In the first  
twelfth chapter of his Gospel, St. Matthew  
telling of a thing that happened early in the second  
Lord's ministry. In Palestine, a country  
and corn fields, the barley harvest began  
day of the Passover—early in April.  
of golden grain ripe for the sickle.



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In every parable, therefore, we must seek for the inner meaning. St. Matthew, more than the other Gospel writers, is the evangelist of the Kingdom of Heaven, *i.e.* of the Church, and here, in the thirteenth chapter of His Gospel, He gives us a group of seven pictures of it.

In the first parable (xiii. 3-8) we have the sowing of the Gospel seed in the hearts of men.

The four different kinds of ground upon which the seed fell represent four different classes of hearers of God's Word—(1) the ignorant, (2) the shallow, (3) the worldly, and (4) those who earnestly desire to understand and profit by it.

Why did our Lord now teach in parables? We have the answer in verses 11-13 of this thirteenth chapter. Up to this time He had used no parable, and the change was owing to the unbelief and hardness of heart of His hearers.

*In the parable of the Tares* we see the *outward* establishment of the Kingdom.

*The parable of the mustard seed* shows the outward *growth* of the Church from small beginnings.

*The parable of the leaven* refers to its *inward* growth,—its growth in grace.

*The parables of the hidden treasure, the pearls, and the draw-net* are parables found in St. Matthew's Gospel only, and were spoken, not to the multitude, but to the disciples.

The hidden treasure, and the pearl of great price, show the exceeding preciousness, the priceless value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. The treasure and the pearl may be taken to mean Christ Himself. The net again is the Church gathering into her pale all the baptized—good and bad.

In summing up His teaching, our Lord compared



Himself to a Scribe. As the Scribes were the best instructors of the Jews, so He uses the title of Himself as a teacher of the doctrine of the new heavenly kingdom.

**Visit to Nazareth** (xiii. 53-58). At the close of His discourse, our Lord appears to have paid a brief visit to Nazareth, "His own country." But here He had no honour. They were scandalized at One, whom they had known so well, becoming so great a Teacher. Their unbelief, in some wonderful way, limited the Lord's power of work. "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

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#### NOTES.

##### A. On the Parable of the Sower.

ver. 4. *The way side.* The hard beaten path.

ver. 5. *Stony places (rock, St. Luke).* Places where the soil is very shallow, soon drying up in the hot sun.

ver. 7. *Among thorns.* The brambles and briars which would choke the young corn shoots.

ver. 8. *An hundredfold.* Cf. Gen. xxvi. 12.

##### B. On the Parable of the Tares.

ver. 25. *Tares.* A plant, known to us as *darnel*. In its earlier growth it is very similar to the young wheat plant, and scarcely to be distinguished from it.

ver. 43. *The kingdom of their Father.* Not the Church militant, but *triumphant*, as it will be after the Second Advent.



## CHAPTER VII.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

HEROD ANTIPAS AND HERODIAS—HEROD'S BANQUET  
—DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE FEEDING  
OF THE FIVE THOUSAND—JESUS ALONE—THE  
STORM ON THE LAKE—JESUS WALKS ON THE  
WATER—PETER'S TRIAL OF FAITH.

#### **D**EATH of John the Baptist (xiv. 1-12).

Herod Antipas,<sup>1</sup> the ruler of Galilee in the time of our Lord, was a son of Herod the Great, who slaughtered the little children of Bethlehem. Though not so cruel a tyrant as his father, we know him to have been a wicked man, and the murderer of John the Baptist. His queen, Herodias, a granddaughter of Herod the Great, first married her uncle Philip,<sup>2</sup> but left him for Herod Antipas, although her own husband and Herod's wife were both living; besides, as she was Herod's niece, it was in every way unlawful for him to marry her. John the Baptist so deeply offended Herod by rebuking him for his sin in this matter, that Herod imprisoned him in the fortress of Machærus, on the east coast of the Dead Sea. But Herodias

<sup>1</sup> Or the "tetrarch" (Matt. xiv. 1; Luke iii. 1, 19).

<sup>2</sup> Not the tetrarch (Luke iii. 1), but another son of Herod, who lived a private life.







felt them, and when the disciples of John told Him what had happened, it was grief, most likely, that caused Him to go "into a desert place apart."<sup>1</sup> But He could not be hid. No sooner did the people, who followed in crowds upon His footsteps, hear that the great Teacher had crossed over to the other side of the lake, than they went after Him by land, round the northern shore of the lake, and meeting Him in a lonely place near Bethsaida Julias. Here, in the dominions of Philip the tetrarch of Ituræa, and within sight of the hills of Bashan, our Lord taught the multitude until the evening. Then, instead of sending them away fasting to their distant homes, He fed five thousand men, besides probably as many women and children, with five barley loaves and two fishes, until they had all well eaten. The twelve disciples filled their baskets with the fragments gathered from the ground.<sup>2</sup>

**The Storm on the Lake** (xiv. 22-33). But Jesus had not yet been alone. The people had gone, but the disciples were still with Him. To obtain the solitude He needed He bade these latter return in the boat to the other side of the lake. He ascended Himself into the hill country to be alone with God; and there, in the deep hush of the night—the stars shining silently overhead, the lake still and unruffled below—the Holy One poured out His soul to God. . . .

The hours passed, and the early morning came; but how changed was all around! The stars were shining

<sup>1</sup> Near, probably, Bethsaida Julias, at the north-east corner of the lake, not Bethsaida on the west shore of the lake. Cf. Luke ix. 10. Whether, however, there were two Bethsaidas is somewhat doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> The basket intended is the "cophinus," a kind of wallet ("scrip," ch. x. 10), which the Jews carried with them to avoid pollution with Gentile food.



no longer, the heavens had gathered blackness, the wind swept past in angry gusts, and there was a storm upon the lake. Then Jesus, knowing that the time had now come to help His disciples, left the solitary place and hastened down to the sea. There, with the wind in His face (for it came from the opposite shore), and the waves breaking furiously at His feet, the Lord saw the boat with His disciples in the midst of the lake. He went to help them.

They were nearly worn out with rowing, and battling with the tempest. They had been toiling well-nigh all night, and it was now between three and six o'clock in the morning,<sup>1</sup> yet they had only come some twenty-five or thirty furlongs—between three and four miles. Just at this time they saw the figure of a man standing erect upon the water, and coming towards them through the gloom! They had been out in many a storm, and feared neither wind nor waves; but this was a new terror. No man could walk upon the sea, however smooth, and how much less could he do it in a raging storm! "It is," they said, "a spirit," and they cried out in great dread; but a well-known voice answered them, "It is I; be not afraid;" and then they knew it was the Lord!

Peter was no longer afraid; he thought he could even walk like his Lord upon the water. "Lord, if it be Thou," he said, "bid me come unto Thee on the water." Jesus answered, "Come!" and in another minute Peter was walking to meet his Lord. His faith in the Lord helped him to step forth upon the sea, and even to stand, nay, to walk upon it; but the wind and waves were too much for him. He forgot *his Lord* and thought only of *them*; so he began to sink, and

<sup>1</sup> "The fourth watch of the night," Matt. xiv. 25.



cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus stretched forth His hand, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Thus kindly did his Lord give him a lesson in humility. Faith he had, but he was taught its weakness; and courage he had, but it was apt to fail him when the moment of excitement was over.

**Difference between True and False Religion** (xv. 1-20). In the fifteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel we find the Scribes and Pharisees again questioning our Lord, and in fact taking Him to task. "Why," they said, "do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" Jesus answered their question by asking another, "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" and then gave them an example of how they had done this. "For *God* commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother. But *ye* say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, and honour<sup>1</sup> not his father or his mother, he shall be free." Now, what did the Scribes and Pharisees mean by this? They meant that a son might avoid giving of his means—his money or property—to a parent in want by saying, "It is a gift to God;" "I have set it apart for holy purposes." And yet, after all, as the Pharisees taught, he need not really give it; it was enough to go through the pretence of doing so. Well might our Lord exclaim, "Ye hypocrites! . . . in vain do ye worship Me." The whole passage is most important, for in it we have our Lord's teaching on tradition.

What do we understand by tradition?

A tradition is a doctrine, or a saying, or a story, not

<sup>1</sup> Honour, in this passage, implies not respect and obedience only, but also succour and support.



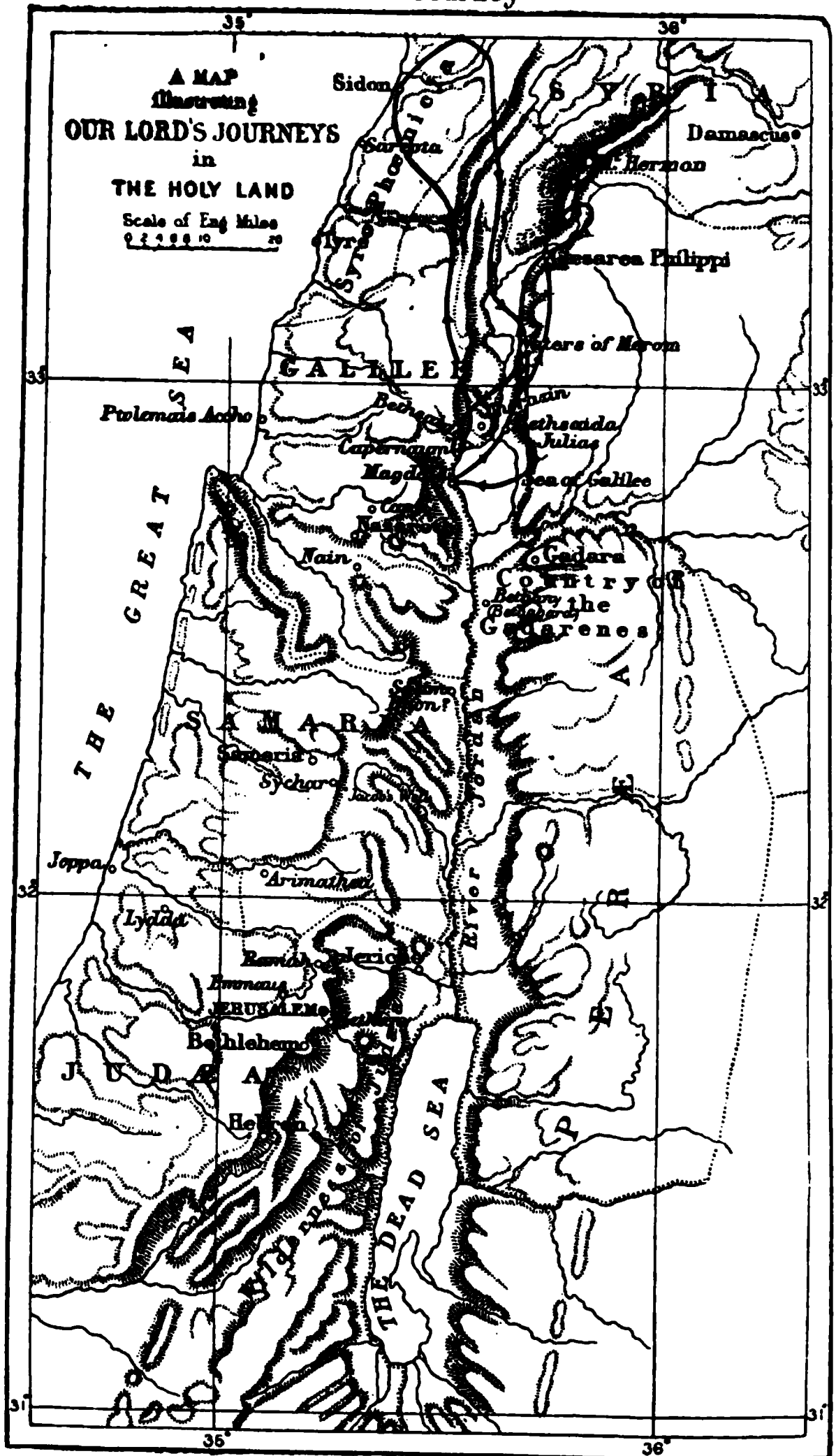
put into writing, but handed down by word of mouth. In the early Church, Christian doctrine was taught orally, that is, by word of mouth, and so St. Paul speaks of "traditions" which are to be held fast.<sup>1</sup> But after a time, as traditions are passed from mouth to mouth, they are apt to get altered and corrupted. Our Lord put the Word of God first, and far above human traditions, which, unless carefully watched, may pass into new doctrines and practices, and substitute human interpretations of God's Word for the Word itself. The teaching of the English Church on this matter is in full agreement with the teaching of Christ Himself<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 15, iii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Art. VI.



# 4<sup>th</sup> Journey





## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Journey into Phœnicia: Return through Decapolis.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN—PETER'S CONFESSION—  
SORROW OF THE DISCIPLES — THE TRANS-  
FIGURATION.

**THE Woman of Canaan** (xv. 21-28). We now come to an important point of time in our Lord's ministry. His ministry in Galilee was well-nigh over ; and we find Him taking long journeys with His disciples to the far north of Palestine. We can trace His footsteps into Phœnicia, some fifty miles from Capernaum, and even, probably, as far as Sidon, that famous seaport of the ancient world.<sup>1</sup> It was in this journey that our Lord healed the daughter of the Gentile "woman of Canaan."<sup>2</sup> Her earnest supplication—the silence of the Lord—the woman's perseverance—and the reward of her faith—are a lesson to us in the efficacy of faithful, humble prayer.<sup>3</sup>

**Feeding of the Four Thousand** (xv. 29-39).

<sup>1</sup> "He came through Sidon," Mark vii. 31, R.V.

<sup>2</sup> She was, as St. Mark tells us (vii. 26), a native of Phœnicia.

<sup>3</sup> The R.V.—"Yea, Lord : for even"—gives the sense of the woman's reply better than A.V.—"Truth, Lord : yet." She does not dispute our Lord's words, but accepts them as a plea for urging her request.



How long our Lord stayed in these Gentile parts we are not told. We may believe it was only a brief visit, for He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ; and *them* He must seek, however hard their hearts, however blind they were and dull of hearing. He returned, therefore, through the half Gentile Decapolis to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here, again, great multitudes came to Him, bringing their sick and blind and lame and dumb, to cast *them* down at the feet of Jesus ; and He healed them, —so that the people glorified the God of Israel. Once more our Lord fed them, multiplying the seven loaves and the few little fishes, until four thousand men, besides women and children, had eaten and were satisfied ; and the disciples filled seven large baskets<sup>1</sup> with the fragments strewn upon the ground. Then Jesus crossed over to Magdala, on the western side of the lake.

**A Sign demanded from Heaven (xvi. 1–12).**

No sooner was our Lord again in Galilee, than the Pharisees, with the Sadducees,<sup>2</sup> tempted Him. The Pharisees and Sadducees hated each other, but they joined together against the Great Teacher of the people ; and they desired a sign from heaven (or in the heavens) to show that He was the Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> Not merely wallets, or pouches, as in the former miracle, but larger, more like hampers, as is clear from Acts ix. 25, where the same word is used. The distinction is always observed in the accounts of the two miracles. Cf. Matt. xvi. 9, 10, marginal note in R.V.

<sup>2</sup> The Sadducees were a religious sect of the Jews opposed in their teaching to the Pharisees (Matt. xxii. 23 ; Acts xxiii. 8). They despised the uneducated people (John vii. 49). The chief priests in the time of our Lord were mostly of this sect (Acts iv. 1, 6). They were not, perhaps, as jealous of our Lord as were the Pharisees. We only hear of them twice (Matt. xvi. 1, xxii. 23) in the Gospels as His assailants. But to the Apostles afterwards, as Preachers of the Resurrection, they were greatly opposed.



What were the mighty miracles of Jesus, the fame of which filled the land, but signs? and yet these men would not be convinced by them; they must have a sign of their own choosing. They read the prophets, but failed to see that the words of the prophets were fulfilled in Jesus; they discerned the face of the sky, but had no eyes for the signs of the times. Our Lord called them an "adulterous generation." How adulterous? The Israelites of old were married to God by a solemn covenant, as Christians are now by baptism; and just as a woman who leaves her husband and lives with another man is an adulteress, so the departure of the Jews from God, and their refusing the Lord Himself, when He came to them, was faithlessness to the Covenant—a spiritual adultery.

**St. Peter's Confession** (xvi. 13-20). So our Lord "left them and departed." He crossed the lake again to the eastern side and journeyed up the valley of the Jordan to Cæsarea Philippi,<sup>1</sup> just under Mount Hermon, and about thirty miles from the Sea of Galilee. Here He could be alone with His disciples, and prepare them for the great event now close at hand. St. Matthew has recorded some of the things that Jesus said to His disciples as He journeyed thither. In answer to their Lord's question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter, ever ready, as we have seen, in speech and action, answered boldly, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and Jesus blessed him as Simon Bar-jona, and said, "Thou art Peter" (a rock, or stone),<sup>2</sup> "and upon this rock I will build My Church." It is as if He had

<sup>1</sup> There were two Cæsareas, the other being on the coast of the Mediterranean, and capital of Judæa in New Testament times (Acts xxiii. 33, xxv. 6).  
<sup>2</sup> Cf. John i. 42.



said, "Though thou art only Simon, son of Jonas, by natural birth, thy faith hath made thee a Peter—a rock—one of the foundation stones of My Church." This seems to be what our Lord wished to express ; but the other Apostles were equally with Peter foundation-stones in that spiritual building of which Christ Himself is the "precious corner-stone," "the sure foundation."<sup>1</sup>

The Lord also said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

By "the kingdom of heaven" we must bear in mind Christ meant His Church on earth ; but what are we to understand by the keys? A key is a sign of stewardship, and Peter, with the other Apostles, and all true ministers of Christ, are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). Keys are tokens of authority in opening and shutting. Peter opened the doors of the Church to thousands on the Day of Pentecost, and he shut them against Simon the Sorcerer (Acts viii.). The "binding and loosing" seem to mean "every exercise of Church authority."<sup>2</sup> Amongst the Jews to bind and to loose meant to forbid and to allow ; the words imply authority, government, discipline. In Matt. xviii. 18 the same power of discipline is given to the Church collectively.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxviii. 16 ; Eph. ii. 20-22. Cf. Collect for St. Simon and St. Jude. Some think that by "this rock" our Lord meant Himself ; others, with more probability, that He meant "the faith, that He is the Christ, the Son of God."

<sup>2</sup> Goulburn's *Holy Catholic Church*, p. 145. See Acts v. 1-11, x. 1-48.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word here translated Church means "called out," and



**First Announcement of the Passion** (xvi. 21-28). But Jesus had other things to say to His disciples. He had already *hinted* at the cross and the grave;<sup>1</sup> but now He would speak *plainly* of all that was soon to happen to Him; how “He must go to Jerusalem and be killed, and be raised the third day.” Peter again was foremost in answering his Lord. While the others listened in mournful and astonished silence, he rebuked his Divine Master—taking Him apart, or putting his hand upon Him in his eagerness, and saying, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” But mark how different was the answer this time. *Before* it was, “Blessed art thou, Simon. . . . I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;” *now*, “Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me.”<sup>2</sup> Satan had used Peter to tempt the Lord once more, to take the crown without the cross—the glory without the humiliation.

With footsteps sad and slow the disciples now followed Him Whom they had recognized as the Messiah. They had dreamt only of a kingdom of glory in this world, of which Jesus would be the visible king, and in which they would be great. Appearances had indeed for some time been against such an expectation; but they clung to the hope firmly, passionately. They loved their Master. And was He not the Christ—the Anointed of God? Was He not to redeem Israel? Should He after all be

refers to the society of believers who are “called out” from the world, and form the body of baptized Christians.

By “the gates of hell (Hades, R.V.)” our Lord meant that no power of death should destroy His Church.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 38, xii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, a snare, or a stumbling-stone.



put to death?—and *such* a death? Had they not left all to follow Him? and was *this* their reward! Must they also take up the cross of suffering and humiliation? Yes, their Master had said it: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross*, and follow Me!” Yet, before all these things came to pass, they should have a glimpse of His glory; a foretaste of that which was to come *after* the suffering.

**The Transfiguration** (xvii. 1-13). Six days passed, and then Jesus took Peter and the brothers James and John, and “bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them.” Our Lord had said, “There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom,” and now an earnest of this promise was given. Although the glory in the mount was only intended to be a *glimpse* of what should be hereafter, yet it would strengthen the faith of the disciples, and nerve them to meet the terrible days now very near at hand. Let us then follow Jesus and His three disciples up this high mountain,<sup>1</sup> standing, as it were afar off, and gazing, not curiously and presumptuously, but reverently, and with humility, at the great sight.

It was night,<sup>2</sup> and the mountain was shrouded in deepest gloom, when, lo! a wonderful light burst out upon it. The three disciples, waking up from the

<sup>1</sup> Some peak, doubtless, of Mount Hermon, near which they were. Mount Tabor, in Galilee, the traditional site of the transfiguration, was at a distance, and, being at this time crowned by a fortress, could not have been the scene of the vision.

<sup>2</sup> For the Apostles' eyes were heavy with sleep, and when they came down from the mount it was “the next day” (Luke ix. 32-37).



sleep which, in their weariness, had overcome them,<sup>1</sup> gazed at the dazzling splendour ; and what did they see? They saw their Divine Master, but who shall describe the change that had come over Him? His whole Sacred Person was lighted up with a marvellous radiance, His countenance bright as the Sun, His raiment white as the light ; the awful majesty and glory of His eternal Godhead shining through the fleshly tabernacle in which it had been veiled from human eyes. The three disciples beheld His glory, the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father ; and they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Him. The impetuous Peter, no longer able to keep silence, and wishing to detain and enshrine the glory of that vision, proposed to "make three tabernacles." But while he was yet speaking a luminous cloud overshadowed them, and a Voice from heaven testified again to the Sonship of their Lord. . . .

The vision over, Jesus, again laying aside His glory, returned once more to His disciples. They lay cowering on the ground, for they were sore afraid ; but Jesus touched them, saying, "Be not afraid ;" and looking up, they saw Jesus alone. Moses and Elijah—the Law and the Prophets and the Old Covenant of works—had passed away, and Jesus, the High Priest of the New Covenant, only remained.

**The Lunatic Child healed** (xvii. 14-21). Then the Lord with the Three rejoined His other disciples, and healed the lunatic child, whom their wavering faith had failed to heal.

### **Second Announcement of the Passion**

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke's expression may mean that they had successfully struggled against their sleepiness. R.V. has, "When they were fully awake," and in the margin, "Having remained awake."



(xvii. 22, 23). Returning to Galilee, our Lord again spoke to the Twelve of His betrayal, death, and resurrection. They listened in dismayed grief, still not understanding how these things could be, nor what the prophets had spoken about them.

**The Temple Tax** (xvii. 24-27). At Capernaum Jesus paid the annual tribute—tax, or church-rate, as we should call it—to maintain the Temple-worship at Jerusalem ; Peter having taken it miraculously out of the fish's mouth. The Son of God was indeed free ; but not to put a stumbling-block in another's way He was content to pay it.<sup>1</sup>

**Lessons in Humility and Kindness** (xviii. 1-35). In the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel our Lord's teaching in Galilee is brought to a close. That Divine Wisdom which first startled men as they listened spell-bound to the Preacher on the mount,—those heavenly principles which had sounded through the land, which had been taught upon the Lake of Gennesaret, and had echoed in the cities along its shores, was now to be heard no more in Christ's own country.

In these, His last discourses in Galilee, Jesus pressed on His disciples the great lessons of brotherly love and forgiveness, and with the young child placed in the midst, He taught them the blessedness of simplicity and humility, and the sacredness of the little ones.

To forgiveness, there was to be practically no

<sup>1</sup> The tax (half a shekel) for the maintenance of the Temple and its services was to be paid once a year by every male over twenty years of age (Exod. xxx. 13). Its value has been variously estimated at 9d. to 2s. 6d. of our money. The coin found in the fish's mouth was a "stater," which was equal in value to a shekel, and therefore sufficient for both our Lord and St. Peter.



limit. Not only seven times, but seventy times seven, was the erring and repentant brother to be forgiven. In the parable of the unmerciful servant, the sin of those who, having received mercy, show none, was set forth; and the principle enforced, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake *hath forgiven you.*"<sup>1</sup>

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#### NOTE

##### On the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

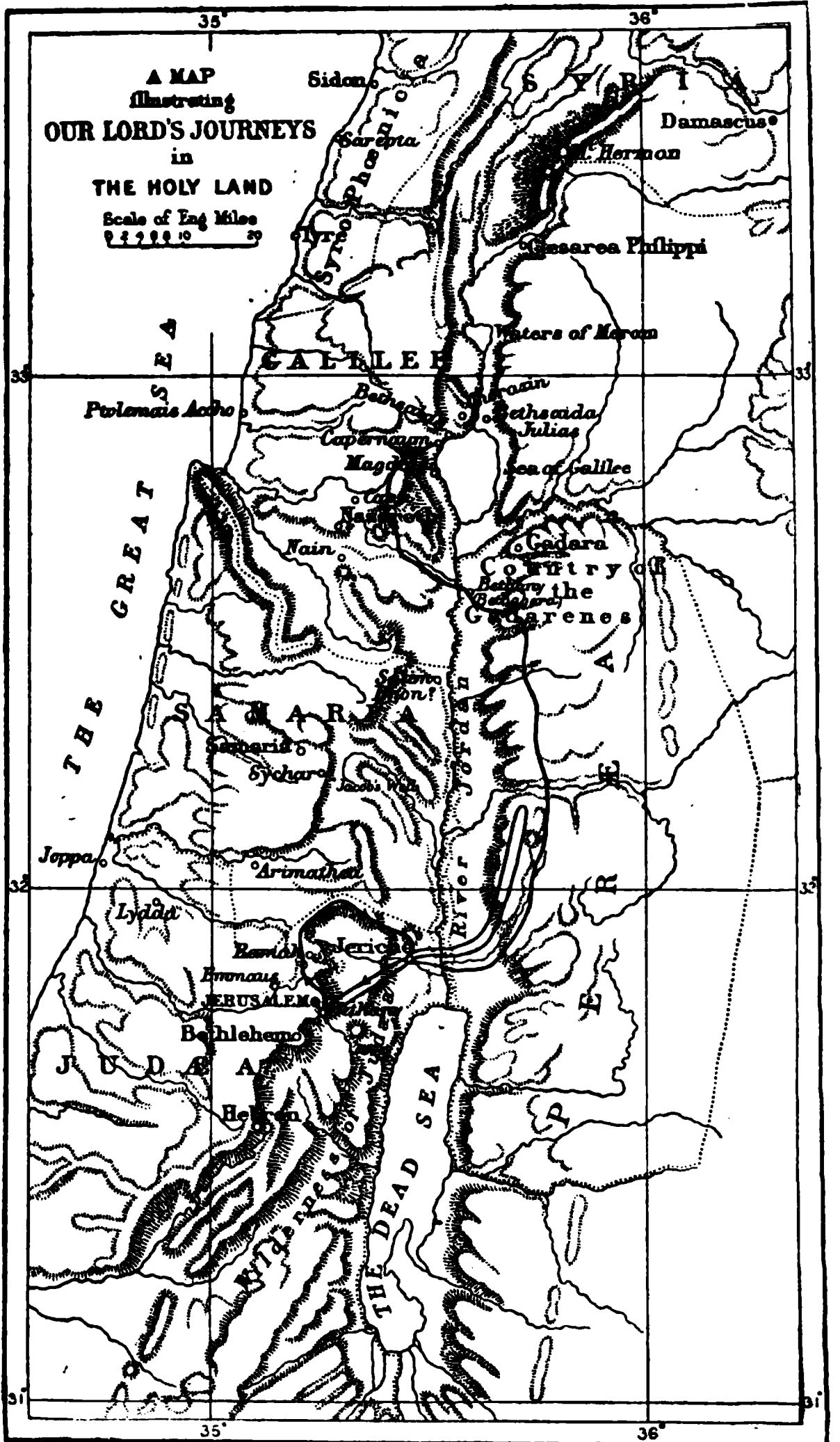
(a) *Ten thousand talents* (supposing talents of gold, value £5475 each, to be intended) would come to more than fifty-four millions of our money; or if talents of silver (value £342 each) to about three millions and a half sterling. Our Lord doubtless intended to mention a sum, ordinarily, beyond the power of any private person to pay. Supposing by the "servants," governors of provinces are referred to, the teaching of the parable remains the same.

(b) *An hundred pence.* A sum equal to £3 2s. 6d. of our money; the Roman penny (*denarius*) being worth about 7½d. of our money, and the usual wages for a day's work in our Lord's time.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 32. Cf. 1 John iii, 18.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Journey





## *CHAPTER IX.*

### **Journey to Jerusalem by Way of Peræa.**

**THE DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE—LITTLE CHILDREN  
AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN—PARABLE OF THE  
LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD—FROM JERICHO  
TO JERUSALEM.**

**T**HE nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel opens upon a different scene. Jesus had left Galilee. The proud cities on the lake had heard His words and seen His miracles, but repented not, and now the Light of the World was withdrawn from them.

St. Matthew says that when Jesus had finished the sayings recorded in his eighteenth chapter, He left Galilee and "came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan," that is, into Peræa, the district on the eastern side of the river. We know, however, from the other Gospels, that our Lord's departure from Galilee was not immediately followed by His retirement into these parts. The Gospels do not profess to give us a full and connected account of our Lord's sojourn on earth ; they are records rather of what is most important for us to know about it.

**The Question of Marriage and Divorce**  
(xix. 1-12). In this region beyond Jordan, great mul-



titudes still followed Jesus, and the Pharisees again tempted<sup>1</sup> Him with questions. They did not really desire information, nor had they any wish to be taught by Him, but they hoped He would express some opinion contrary to the Law of Moses, and so enable them to make out a case against Him. Little did they think how their malignity would be overruled for the good of the Church and of the world. Our Lord, in answer to them, asserted the divine origin of marriage, and its perpetual sacredness.

**The Blessing of Little Children** (xix. 13-15). There is a special fitness in the record of this incident coming immediately after our Lord's solemn words about marriage. Our Church rightly appeals to it as a sanction for Infant Baptism.

**The Rich Young Ruler** (xix. 16-26). In the story of the rich young man we see how our Lord tried to bring home to him the spirituality of the Law, of which he was entirely ignorant, and to convince him of sin: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin."<sup>2</sup> Our Lord set the old covenant before him: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;" "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Here was the law of perfect obedience, which, if it could be rendered, would save the doer of it. Jesus made the Law a schoolmaster<sup>4</sup> to this young man, to bring him to Himself.

The disciples were astonished when they heard "that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>5</sup> It is not, however, riches, but "*trusting*

<sup>1</sup> In the sense of trying, or putting to the proof. Cf. Gen. xxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xviii. 5; Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 24. "Tutor," R.V. <sup>5</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.



in riches"<sup>1</sup>—the spirit they too often beget—that keeps men out of the “kingdom of heaven.” This expression may be taken here either in its ordinary meaning of Christ's heavenly kingdom set up on earth, or as signifying the perfected “kingdom” hereafter.

**The Labourers in the Vineyard** (xix. 27–xx. 16). To understand the parable of the labourers in the vineyard it is necessary to refer to the last few verses of the preceding chapter, for in these we have a key to its meaning.

Peter had asked, “What shall we have therefore who have forsaken all and followed Thee?” The Lord assured him of a glorious recompense; but the feeling in the Apostle's mind, which caused him to ask the question, needed correction. It savoured too much of a bargaining spirit; viewing the recompense not so much as God's free gift, but as a payment for service rendered. The purpose of the parable, therefore, was to teach St. Peter that after all the reward is of grace and not a debt; that at best we are but unprofitable servants, and that God may do what He likes with His own. If God in His sovereignty chooses to make those who have wrought but one hour in His vineyard<sup>2</sup> equal to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, these last have no right to murmur churlishly as if they had been defrauded of their just wages. Salvation is in no case a reward, but the free gift of God.

**Journey to Jerusalem. Third Announcement of the Passion** (xx. 17–19). For the third time our Lord foretold His death and passion to His disciples, doubtless that they might be the better

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.



prepared for the terrible scenes now close at hand. With a more than human courage Jesus pressed on towards Jerusalem, although the dark shadow of the Cross was upon His path, and He knew full well to what the journey would lead Him. Yes, He pressed on, although He knew beforehand all the agonies of His death and passion—all the mysterious depths of that sorrow so soon to take possession of His soul—all the bitterness of that cup of which He alone was so soon to drink.

**Salome's Prayer** (xx. 20-28). Little did His disciples understand it, for the sons of Zebedee, through their mother Salome, boldly asked the Lord that they might sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left in His kingdom ; and blindly declared that they were able to drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism.

**Two Blind Men healed** (xx. 29-34). At Jericho our Lord gave sight to the blind, and then, leaving that city, He began His toilsome ascent up the steep and rugged road that led to Jerusalem.

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#### NOTES.

##### A. On the Story of the Rich Young Man.

(a) "*Why callest thou Me good ?*" (xix. 17). Jesus did not mean to call His own goodness in question by these words. The young man did not know Him as God, but only as a godly man, and the Lord did not make His Godhead known to him, or He might have said, "There is none good but One, that is God ; yet thou hast spoken well, for I am God." Jesus, far from implying that He was not God, would not allow Himself to be regarded merely as a good man.

(b) "*It is easier for a camel,*" etc. (xix. 24). A familiar expression for anything very difficult.



**B. On the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.**

(a) "*His vineyard*" (xx. 1). God's Church.

(b) "*Third hour*" (xx. 3). 9 o'clock in the morning ; the Jewish day being reckoned from sunrise, of which 6 o'clock may be taken as the average time.

(c) "*The eleventh hour*" (xx. 6). 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when only one hour's work remained to be done.

(d) "*Is thine eye evil*" (xx. 15). "Evil" here means envious.

(e) "*So the last shall be first*" (xx. 16). The last called into God's service ; the first called losing God's favour by their envy and discontent.

(f) "*For many be called, but few chosen*" (xx. 16). Many men are *called* to various kinds of work, but only those are *chosen* who show themselves fit for it ; and so, in spiritual things, many are called in Baptism to outward privileges, and are made heirs of the Kingdom, but it is only the few who attain to the heavenly inheritance.

**C. On Salome's Request.**

(a) To drink of the same cup, or to be baptized with the same baptism, as another, implies the closest fellowship or communion. Our Lord taught this in the institution of His two sacraments.

For the sufferings of St. James, see Acts xii. 1 ; and for St. John's, Rev. i. 9.

(b) xx. 23. The words in italics [*it shall be given to them*] (A.V.) ; *it is for them* (R.V.), are not in the original, and are better omitted. "Christ has the privilege to give, *but only to those for whom* it is intended by His Father."



## CHAPTER X.

### The Holy Week.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM—IN THE  
TEMPLE—OUR LORD DENOUNCES THE PHARI-  
SEES—THE TEMPLE TO BE DESTROYED—JESUS  
AND HIS DISCIPLES—ON OLIVET.

**THE Entry into Jerusalem: Sunday**, the 9th of Nisan (xxi. 1-11). St. Matthew puts a grand and striking picture or panorama before us in the twenty-first chapter of his Gospel. Let us look at it and study it; for where else can we behold so grand and marvellous a scene? We imagine ourselves, as in the picture, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives—the side furthest from Jerusalem, and looking towards Bethany, a village about two miles from the city, and what do we see? There, walking slowly along the rocky road that winds round the southern slopes of the hill, is the Lord Jesus, His disciples, and a multitude of people who have followed Him from Bethany, where He has passed the night. Looking the opposite way, we see another multitude of people coming *from* Jerusalem, bearing in their hands branches of the palm-tree.<sup>1</sup> They had heard that He was coming, and they have gone out to meet

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John xii. 13.



Him—to welcome Him as their King—to do Him homage. The two companies meet at the village of Bethphage,<sup>1</sup> and here they rest, while Jesus sends two of His disciples into the village, to bring the ass which, according to our Lord's foreknowledge, would be found "tied," and, unknown to its owner—a secret follower, probably, of our Lord—waiting for His use. So far Jesus has walked, but not on foot is He to enter His own city, the city of David, where the daughter of Zion is to welcome Him as her King. Nor does St. Matthew fail to put on record that in this way the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> The ass, an animal held in high estimation in the East,<sup>3</sup> is brought and made ready by the disciples, and Jesus, seated upon it, rides slowly onward, "in meek majesty," up the eastern side of Olivet, amidst the shouts and rejoicings of the people: "and a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches<sup>4</sup> from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!"<sup>5</sup> But now a loftier part of the road is reached, and the Holy City comes into sight—its gardens and palaces, its towers, walls, and bulwarks—rising in stately grandeur out of the deep valley of the Kedron; the white stones and gilded

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* "the house of figs." It was clearly close to if not a part of Bethany, but its exact locality is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. ix. 9.

<sup>3</sup> It is said that an ass, which had never been ridden or used for work, was regarded as sacred.

<sup>4</sup> Small twigs, and young shoots, are intended.

<sup>5</sup> Psa. cxviii. 25, 26. "Hosanna" means "Save now" (Psa. cxviii. 25), and corresponds to our "God save the Queen." "In the highest" shows that the multitudes regarded Jesus Christ as the Messiah.



roof of its magnificent Temple flashing and glittering in the sun. Then the people rise to a higher pitch of enthusiasm, and their shouts are louder as they stand gazing, in earnest admiration, at the holy and the hymn of praise rings clearer as "as they move on slowly through the olive-gardens, across the deep torrent bed of the Kedron, and up the rocky slope on the further side, and so through one of the city gates to the levelled ledge of Mount Moriah on which the Temple stood." Yes, the King of Glory has come in! He—the Christ, the Messiah, Anointed of God—is in the midst of His people; alas! they know Him not on this the day of His visitation! Tens of thousands of pilgrims, who have come from all parts to the great Festival of the Passover now nigh at hand, crowd to the mystic worship of the Temple; but they know not that One greater than the Temple<sup>2</sup> is there. The Lord saw the desecration of the sacred courts, though on that day He raised His hand against it.

**Monday**, the 10th of Nisan (xxi. 12-17). The morning, as we learn from St. Mark, He drove out the traffickers who had made His Father's House, only a place of merchandise, but a den of thieves. He healed the blind and the lame, while the children in the Temple sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

**Tuesday**, 11th Nisan (xxi. 18-xxv. 46). The

<sup>1</sup> The Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, were the three great feasts of the Jews. For a further account of them see *The Old Testament Manual*. As many as 3,000,000 of people, Josephus tells us, sometimes come to these feasts.

<sup>2</sup> The Temple, rebuilt after the Babylonian Captivity, was adorned and beautified by Herod the Great. It was not even yet completed at this time of our Lord's last visit to it.



following the chief priests, not seeking the truth, however, but occasion against Him, came to Him again with questions. By what authority, they asked, had He cleared the Temple? And Jesus answered them by asking another question—The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? They hesitated what answer to give. They argued, "if we shall say, from heaven," that then the Lord would ask, why they had not believed him. On the other hand, they were afraid of stirring up the anger of the populace if they refused to acknowledge John's Divine commission. So they answered, "We cannot tell;" and the Lord consequently refused to tell them by what authority He was acting. Then, in the hearing of the multitude, He rebuked the chief priests and elders in three parables, all of them relating to the apostasy of the Jews. It was easy to see the meaning of these parables.

"*The Two Sons*" (xxi. 28-32) represent (a) the sinners, who from leading a life of sin repented at the preaching of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and (b) the Spiritual Teachers of the people, who, professing to do God's will, did it not. Some of them, indeed, such as a Nicodemus and St. Paul, would enter the Kingdom of God, but it would be after many of these despised sinners had already entered in.

"*The Wicked Husbandmen*" (xxi. 33-46) represent the Jewish Church, the members of which, especially perhaps the chief priests and scribes, were the first tenants, so to speak, of the Vineyard, that is, of God's Kingdom on earth.<sup>1</sup>

In "*The Marriage of the King's Son*" (xxii. 1-14),

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Isa. vv. 1-7. In Matt. xxi. 42 our Lord quotes from the very Psalm (cxviii.) from which the people, two days before, had taken their "Hosannas."



where the wedding is "the Incarnation and its ministry of grace," our Lord points out the rejection by Jews of the gracious invitation put forth, first by Himself, and afterwards by His Apostles. Because of rejection, repentance, which once was possible to them, was now no longer so. The time had gone by. There was nothing but destruction for themselves and the city.<sup>1</sup>

**The Question as to Tribute** (xxii. 15-22) angry did these parables make the rulers, that would have dragged Jesus before the Sanhedrin Council, had it not been that they feared the people. All they could do now was to get Him into trouble either with the Romans, or with the populace ; and they prepared their questions accordingly. First the Pharisees, uniting with their political opponents the Herodians, the supporters of the Roman power, asked Him, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar the Roman Emperor "or not?" If He should say "No," the Herodians would accuse Him to the Romans. He said "Yes," He would compromise Himself with the Pharisees and the people, as One who allowed the payment of tribute to heathens. The people had little need to ask the question ; for the image and superscription was stamped upon the money? Whose but Cæsar's ; and did not they know that they were his subjects ! Let them, then, give back to Cæsar what belonged to Cæsar, and reserve themselves as tribute unto God.

<sup>1</sup> We may note that the invitation is the Offer of Baptism and the Wedding Garment is "Sanctification," which is only to be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, and the putting on of Christ in (cp. Acts ii. 38 ; Gal. iii. 27 ; Eph. iv. 24, and see also First Eucharist in the Service for Holy Communion). By the people in the parable and the hedges was of course intended all outside of the Jewish Church.



**The Question about the Resurrection** (xx. 23-33). But the rulers were not content to give up the attempt to entangle Him. The Sadducee section accordingly plied Him with a question about the Resurrection, and then a lawyer, put forth by the Pharisees, asked our Lord "Which was the great commandment in the law?" (xxii. 34-41). Our Lord answered both questioners in such a way as to silence them, and to throw new and wonderful light upon the sacred Scriptures. Then, assuming the offensive, if so we may say, Jesus asked the Pharisees a question (xxii. 41-45) which they could not answer. So utterly discomfited were the adversaries, that we are told, "From that day forth, no one dare ask Him any more questions."

**Christ's last Public Words** (xxiii.). From His adversaries, our Lord turned to the multitude. To them, and then to the scribes and Pharisees themselves, He poured forth His terrible accusations and denunciations of all the blind guides and false teachers who, under whatever name, were leading the people to destruction (see Matt. xxiii.). But, in the midst of all the persecutions of His enemies, and with His own sufferings so near at hand, our Lord's lament was not for Himself, but for the people, who were drawing upon themselves such a fearful punishment, and for that beloved city so soon to be made desolate.

Our Lord's *public* ministry was now over : from this time His teaching was for the disciples only. "Ye shall not see me henceforth." The people should see Him no more as their Teacher—though they would be witnesses of His Cross and Passion ; and yet, in His last words, there was a greeting even for them. A day should come when they (not the men He was speaking to, but their posterity) would say, "Blessed is



He that cometh in the Name of the Lord,"<sup>1</sup> and which they should acknowledge, as their King Saviour, Him Whom they now rejected, and so Israel should be saved.<sup>2</sup>

**Discourse on the Mount of Olives** (lxxv.). Then Jesus left the Temple with His disciples but as they walked slowly away, the disciples admired the magnificence of the building which six and seventy years of constant labour had not sufficed to finish huge stones of whitest marble of which it was built its stately courts and chambers ; and they called the Lord's attention to the massiveness of the vast structure. But what was his answer? "See ye all things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be brought down." And then, passing out of the city, and entering the valley of the Kedron, they ascended the Mount of Olivet. Here our Lord rested with His twelve ; and, gazing sadly at the Temple just opposite as it lay gilded with the rays of the setting sun, of them, Peter, James, John and Andrew,<sup>3</sup> grew closer to their Lord, and asked Him privately, "What shall these things be" (*i.e.* the calamities on Jerusalem), "and what shall be the sign of Thy coming at the end of the world?" In reply, Jesus spoke of the troubles to come upon the Jews of that generation and of the destruction of Jerusalem ; and it was interesting, did space permit, to note how all this was accomplished—how the Romans oppressed the Jews, and the Jews rebelled against the Roman Empire, the Roman armies, under Titus (A.D. 70), came against Jerusalem and destroyed it, so that of the Temple nor houses was one stone left upon another.

<sup>1</sup> Psa. cxviii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 25, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mark



Our Lord went on (xxiv. 36-45) to foretell His own Second Advent, or coming again in glory. He spoke of two events, not near together, though in His discourse they seemed so, because they were *then* both future ; just as two distant mountains, lying in the same direction, look close together, or even like a single mountain, although there may be a wide valley between them. One of these events, the destruction of Jerusalem, is now long past, and we have journeyed on far towards the other—the glorious appearing of our Lord ; and for this He solemnly cautioned His Church to “watch” and to be “ready.”

To enforce His lesson of watchfulness our Lord addressed three parables to His disciples, as earlier in the day He had spoken three to His adversaries.

In the first of these, that of *the Stewards* (xxiv. 45-51), our Lord contrasts the blessedness of the steward who is living and acting always in the thought of his Master's return with the terrible end of him who, reckoning on an indefinite period, spends his time cruelly and uselessly.

The parable of *the ten Virgins* (xxv. 1-13) repeats the same lesson. The baptized Christian is a “light of the world,”<sup>1</sup> and therefore the lamp of the parable represents his responsibility, while the oil denotes God's grace, without which no lamp can be kept burning. The parable teaches us to make the utmost use we can, whilst there is time, of all the means of grace which God has given us.

And once more, in the Parable of *the Talents* (xxv. 14-30), are taught that our watchfulness must embrace the care and nurture of those gifts and privileges which God has bestowed upon us as members

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 14.



## CHAPTER XI.

### The Holy Week.

THE LAST SUPPER—IN GETHSEMANE—BEFORE  
COUNCIL—BEFORE THE GOVERNOR.

**THURSDAY**, 13th Nisan. As Jesus sat with His disciples on the Mount of Olives after His prophetic discourse, recorded by St. Matthew in the 24th and 25th chapters of his Gospel, He told them that after two days He would be “betrayed and crucified.” Of what our Lord did the next day, Wednesday, and a part of Thursday, we have no precise account—perhaps He spent them quietly at Bethany. Meanwhile His enemies were not idle. They had failed, as we have seen, to get Him by their own power; they dared not arrest Him openly for fear of the people, nor could they denounce Him to the Roman governor, for they had nothing of weight to accuse Him. The *Chief Priests*, the *Scribes* and *Elders*<sup>1</sup> who formed the Sanhedrin, or Great Council of the nation, accordingly met together at the house of Caiaphas the high priest, to think of some plan for seizing our Lord in His private haunts,—how “

<sup>1</sup> The Chief Priests were the heads of the twenty-four “courses” into which the Priests were divided (1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19); the Scribes were the authorized expounders of the Law, and the Elders were chosen from the people and pointed on the Council because of their age and experience.



Him by subtlety and kill Him." This could hardly be done except by the treachery of some one trusted by our Lord, and who knew His movements. The traitor was found amongst the chosen twelve. Judas Iscariot came to them with his offer of betrayal, and for thirty pieces of silver agreed to deliver his gracious Master into their hands.<sup>1</sup>

**The Last Supper** (xxvi. 17-37). It was on Thursday in Holy Week that the disciples, according to their Lord's command, made ready the Passover, that they might eat it with Him before He suffered. This Paschal Supper fell this year on a Thursday. It commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> The paschal lamb was eaten with thin cakes of unleavened bread, and a sauce of sweet fruits ; wine was also partaken of ; while the 113th, 114th, 115th, and 118th Psalms were chanted as the Hallel or song of praise. In the evening Jesus sat down to the paschal meal with His disciples. Then we read how Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him—of the disciples' sorrow, each one asking Him, "Lord, is it I?"—how the traitor was shown to be Judas, and how our Lord instituted that Holy Supper of His body and blood, which was to strengthen and refresh the souls of all His faithful people, until He should come again.

This last meal of the Lord with His disciples before He suffered was finished, and the last hymn was sung, when they went out into the still night once more, slowly taking their way to the Mount of Olives.

<sup>1</sup> Thirty pieces of silver, that is, thirty shekels, the price of a slave (Exod. xxi. 32), equivalent to nearly £4 of our money. To explain the action of Judas, St. Matthew here inserts the account of the Supper at Bethany, which had really taken place on the previous Sunday.

<sup>2</sup> See Exod. xii.



Jesus told them that they all would be offended cause of Him that night. Peter protested he would never be offended, but Jesus assured him that before the cock crowed he should thrice deny his Lord. Peter answered, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee," and so said all the disciples. When they came to Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, Jesus, bidding the twelve to remain where they were, retired with Peter, James, and John into the deeper solitudes of the garden.

**Friday, 14th Nisan: The Agony and Betrayal** (xxvi. 37-58). Here, crushed down with a heavy burden, His soul became "exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," and He "fell on His face" before His heavenly Father, crying, "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."

Why this woe? Why this agony? Why this spiritual conflict? Because He, the Sinless and Divine, was bearing the weight of the sins of the world, bearing them away. God made Him "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,"<sup>1</sup> and so, for the time, sin was His. And it was the hour of the power of darkness;<sup>2</sup> the Wicked One, who tempted our Lord in the wilderness, and then left Him "for a season," returned in this hour of the Redeemer's sorrow with his fiercest assaults and subtlest whispering.

Three times did our Lord cry, in agony of soul, to His Father; and three times He returned to His disciples, whom He had charged to watch with Him, to find them asleep and unconscious of his sore straits.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxii. 53. Cf. John xiv.



At last, in sorrowful reproof, He told them to sleep on. But while He yet spake the traitor with his band was stealing upon them. Torches and lanterns began to gleam amongst the olive trees, and, lo ! a great multitude, with Judas at their head, came to lay hands upon Jesus Christ. The traitor's kiss followed, and Peter's hasty blow, and then the Holy and All-powerful One, Whose word could have brought legions of angels to His side, went calmly with the soldiers to the palace of the high priest. His disciples forsook Him and sought their own safety in flight. Peter, however, followed at a distance to the palace gate, and, through St. John,<sup>1</sup> obtained admission into the court-yard.

**Peter's Denial** (xxvi. 69-75). Here it was, that he, who a little while before had drawn his sword against a multitude, quailed at the accusing word of a maid-servant, and thrice denied his Lord and Master.

**Trial before Caiaphas** (xxvi. 59-68). It was early morning when Jesus was led into the hall of Caiaphas, where the Sanhedrin had met at the first break of day, not really to try their prisoner, but to hurry over a condemnation already determined upon. He was innocent, and, because there was absolutely no charge against him, false witnesses were hired, who contradicted each other, so that even these unjust judges could not accept their testimony. But the high priest had other ways of obtaining evidence ; he determined to get it from the Prisoner Himself, adjuring Him by the living God to say whether He was "*the Christ the son of God.*" The Court listened eagerly for the answer, which, if it should be in the

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 16.



affirmative, would procure His condemnation to death as the punishment of blasphemy. While all eyes were turned upon the Prisoner standing patiently before them, and Who had said nothing to all the false accusations brought against Him, He replied to the high priest's question, and said, "Thou hast said," which meant "Yes, *I am*." The answer was a claim to be Divine. It was enough—more than enough. The high priest rent his outer garment, and exclaimed with horror, "He hath spoken blasphemy! What think ye?" And the answer was, "He is guilty of death." Then the servants and underlings of the court imitated the spirit of their superiors, and our Lord submitted Himself to their brutal mockery.

But time pressed ; this Friday, just beginning, was a great feast day,—so the men of the Sanhedrin wished to have their sentence carried out, and our Lord put to death before his countrymen the Galileans, and other pilgrims, were abroad, who might perchance raise a tumult for His rescue. So they hurried Him to the Prætorium or judgment-hall<sup>1</sup> of Pilate, the Roman governor, who had come from Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judæa, to quell, by his presence, any disorder that might arise amongst the excitable people who had crowded to the great national festival at Jerusalem.

**Death of Judas Iscariot** (xxvii. 3-10). Meanwhile Judas, when he saw that the Lord was condemned, hastened to the Temple and cast down before the scornful priests the miserable wages of Satan for which he had sold his Master, and then went and hanged himself ; for his sorrow was not of

<sup>1</sup> The Prætorium, or "Common Hall" (Matt. xxvii. 27), was the military head-quarters of the Roman governor.



the godly sort that worketh repentance, but the sorrow of this world that worketh death.

**Trial before Pilate** (xxvii. 11-31). It was still early morning when the chief men of the Sanhedrin brought their Prisoner before the Prætorium, into which they would not enter lest they should be defiled.<sup>1</sup> When Pilate came out to them, they told him that Jesus was a perverter of the nation, that He forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, and pretended to be the Christ and King of the Jews. But the Lord made no reply to these accusations,

Indeed, it was clear to Pilate that these accusations were a mere pretence. Was it likely that the leading men amongst the Jews would condemn to death one of their own countrymen for not being friendly to the Romans?—for being a patriot! No, it was plain “that for envy they had delivered Him;” they were jealous of His favour with the people. So Pilate appealed to the people. Knowing that it was the custom at this feast to release a prisoner to the people, he asked them whether he should release unto them the notable robber and murderer Barabbas or Jesus? But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should beg Barabbas and destroy Jesus; and in reply to Pilate’s question what he should do with Jesus, their cry was, “Let Him be crucified!”

Pilate was still unwilling to sacrifice his mysterious Prisoner; and his wife also warned him against passing any unjust sentence on Him. So once more he appealed to the people, asking them what evil Jesus had done? but they only answered by still fiercer cries of “Crucify Him.” Then Pilate yielded. He followed the policy of expediency—he would have liked to have

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 28,



saved Jesus, but he would not risk his own interests to save Him. So when he "saw he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made," he tried to satisfy his conscience by washing his hands before the people, meaning by the act that the blame was not his but theirs. With the fearful imprecation, "His blood be on us and our children," they accepted the awful responsibility. Pilate passed sentence on the Holy One,\* and the Roman soldiers scourged Him; they crowned Him with thorns, they mocked Him with pretended homage, and then they led Him away to crucify Him.

The people had indeed brought Jesus into Jerusalem on the first day of the week with songs and rejoicing, because they thought He was the Messiah, and that as the Messiah He would forthwith set up a temporal kingdom, and make them a great and independent people. But now when they saw Him despised and condemned,\* and not at all likely to become their King, they turned against Him all the more bitterly, because He had disappointed their expectations. So the Pharisees were able to make use of them to hasten Pilate's unwilling consent by urging on their fierce cry of "Crucify Him!"



## CHAPTER XII.

### The Holy Week.

#### THE CRUCIFIXION—THE BURIAL—THE RESURRECTION.

**THE Crucifixion** (xxvii. 32-56). Our words must be few and reverent in speaking of our Lord's sufferings and death upon the cross.<sup>1</sup>

The scourging and the mockery over, a centurion's guard took Jesus and the two thieves, who were to be crucified with Him, and led them away to a place called Golgotha <sup>2</sup> outside the city walls,<sup>3</sup> and nearly a mile probably from Pilate's "judgment-hall" on the Western Hill. Each prisoner bore the cross of wood to which he was to be nailed ; but when the soldiers saw that our Lord's strength was failing from the cruel and exhausting treatment through which He had passed, they compelled Simon of Cyrene, a man they chanced to meet, to bear His cross.<sup>4</sup> Arrived at Golgotha, the soldiers proceeded at once with the

<sup>1</sup> *Crucifixion* was a Roman punishment ; it was regarded as one of the worst forms of death, and as accursed. Deut. xxi. 23 ; Gal. iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> So called, either because of the shape of the ground, or because it was a place of burial.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xiii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Simon had probably come to Jerusalem for the Passover. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus ; all three were known to the Church, and probably leading members of it (Mark xv. 21). Cyrene was a Greek colony of Libya, in North Africa.



terrible punishment. Our Lord refused the drink of stupefying wine, for He would drain the cup of suffering to the uttermost. Stripping off His garments and casting lots for them,<sup>1</sup> they crucified Him, and over His sacred head they placed Pilate's mocking inscription—"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, so that all might understand it. The idlers and passers-by, the thieves who were crucified with Him, the chief priests and scribes and elders, all joined in the mockery of our Blessed Redeemer, as He hung upon the cross. These last, the rulers of the people, had not scrupled, from the first, to use the most wicked means to crush Him, although they knew Him to be innocent. They gave money to his false disciple and betrayer, paid lying witnesses to swear away His life, delivered Him to the Gentiles to be put to a death of shame and torture; and now they stood around His cross mocking and blaspheming.

But from the sixth to the ninth hour (from twelve to three o'clock) a pall of darkness was spread over the land, and the mysterious spectacle of the Son of God dying upon the cross was hidden from the eyes of the wicked and profane. One loud cry of extremest suffering and distress—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"<sup>2</sup> the sponge of vinegar lifted to

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xxii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Psa. xxii. 1. The use of these words at this supreme moment by our Lord may be taken to express the anguish of His human soul at the approach of death, when "the life-sustaining breath of God" is withdrawn, or, as some think, Our Lord recited them in order to bear witness to the fulfilment of prophecy. In any case, the words certainly do not mean that the Son in the very moment of complete obedience, was forsaken by the Father. On the other hand, their use shows how bright and full was the faith of our Lord, as the Son of Man, in His heavenly Father, even when He was tasting death for every man.



the parched and dying lips—a solitary act of compassion in the long chapter of outrage and brutality—another piercing cry, and the anguish was over; the world was redeemed; the Son of God had yielded up His Spirit into the hands of His Father. “And” (in the grand but simple language of the sacred text) “behold the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,”<sup>1</sup> and the earth did quake and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” Even the centurion and his guard of Roman soldiers “feared greatly,” and exclaimed, “Truly this was the Son of God!” . . .

**The Burial** (xxvii. 57–66). Though crucified with thieves the body of the Holy One was not to be cast into the grave of the malefactors. Joseph of Arimathæa, a member of the Sanhedrin, but “who had not consented to their counsel and deed,” obtained Pilate’s permission to take down the body of his Lord. Hastily but reverently he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, until after the Sabbath rest, when it could be more carefully tended, and laying it in his own new tomb “hewn out in a rock,” he rolled the great stone-door into its place across the mouth of the cave. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James were sitting near by, watching. They marked well the spot, intending to return on the first day of the week. The chief priests and Pharisees too, with the leave of Pilate, set their seal upon the stone and placed their guard, lest the disciples should take away the body, and say that their Lord had risen from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> The Veil separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. For the significance of the rending, see Heb. x. 19, 20.



**The Resurrection (xxviii.).** The Sabbath passed sadly. By dawn on the first day of the week the two Maries arrived at the sepulchre. A heavenly visitant was there before them. An angel of the Lord—his countenance like lightning, his raiment white as the drifted snow—had already rolled back the stone. The Lord had left the now empty tomb. And the angel said to the women, “Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus Who was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay : and go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead ; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee.”

With mingled feelings of joy and fear—joy at the good news, fear at the mysteries that accompanied them—the women hastened to tell the disciples ; but as they went Jesus Himself stood before them. Holding their Lord by the feet they worshipped Him in trembling awe, while He bade them not to fear, and sent a message to the disciples, “His brethren,” to meet Him in Galilee.

Meanwhile the chief priests and elders heard of the wonders of the resurrection morning testified to, not by the followers of Jesus, but by the Gentile soldiers they had set to guard the tomb. Would they believe in Him now that He had risen from the dead ? No, they would rather bribe the soldiers to falsehood and deception if only they could crush out all faith in the despised Nazarene.

St. Matthew has only selected for record one appearance of the Lord to His Apostles during the great forty days. In a mountain of Galilee the eleven Apostles met their risen Lord according to His own appointment. Here He told them that all power was



given to Him in heaven and in earth, and charged them, no longer to confine their ministry to the Holy Land, but to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"—His own name placed for ever the second in that Blessed Trinity. To encourage and cheer them, He added the gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This appearance was, not improbably, the same as that to the five hundred at once, mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6). The "Galilean" Gospel, as we may term it, of St. Matthew, fitly closes with this account of the last interview of the Christians of Galilee with their risen Lord,



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS I.—XII.

### I. Analysis of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

#### I. The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ. i.-ii.

1. The Royal Lineage from David and Abraham. i. 1-17.
2. The Birth of Jesus Christ. i. 18-25.
3. The Visit of the Magi. ii. 1-12.
4. The Flight into Egypt, and return to Nazareth. ii. 13-23.

#### II. Preparation for the Ministry. iii.-iv. 11.

1. The Forerunner and his Preaching. iii. 1-12.
2. The Baptism of Jesus Christ. iii. 13-17.
3. The Temptation. iv. 1-11.

#### III. Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven by Jesus Christ. iv. 12-xvi. 12.

1. *At Capernaum and in its Neighbourhood.* iv.-viii. 17.

Including—

- (a) The call to Repentance. iv. 17.
- (b) Enrolment of Disciples. iv. 18-22.
- (c) The Cure of Diseases. iv. 23-25.
- (d) A Sermon, showing the Character of the Subjects of the Kingdom, and of its Laws. v.-vii.
- (e) The Working of Miracles. viii. 1-17.

2. *On the Lake and its Eastern Side.* viii. 18-34.

Including—

- (a) Answers to Volunteer Disciples. vii. 18-22.
- (b) Further Miracles :—
  - Stilling the Tempest. viii. 23-27.
  - Healing the Demoniacs. viii. 28-34.



**3. At Capernaum again, and in its Neighbourhood.** ix.—xiii. 52.

Including—

(a) Many Miracles ; (b) The call of Matthew. ix. 1-34.

(c) A Tour of Teaching and Healing. ix. 35-38.

(d) The Mission of the Twelve. x.

(e) Teaching about John the Baptist. xi. 1-19.

(f) Woe to the Unrepentant Cities. xi. 20-24.

(g) Thankfulness to God. xi. 25-27 ; and Call to the Weary. xi. 28, 29.

(h) Teaching about the Sabbath, occasioned by The plucking the Ears of Corn, and The healing of the Withered Hand. xii. 1-13.

(i) Teaching occasioned by the Plotting and Blasphemy of the Pharisees. xii. 14-37.

(k) The Sign-seekers rebuked. xii. 38-45.

(l) The True Kinsfolk of Christ. xii. 46-50.

(m) Teaching by Parables. xiii. 1-52.

**4. At Nazareth.** xiii. 53-58.

**5. About in Galilee.** xiv.—xvi. 12.

Including—

(a) Herod's Opinion of Jesus, and the reason of it.—  
Consequent Retirement of Jesus. xiv. 1-14.

(b) The Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Walking on the Sea, and the Cure of many Sick. xiv. 15-36.

(c) Teaching about True and False Religion. xv. 1-20.

(d) The Woman of Canaan, and the Feeding of the Four Thousand. xv. 21-39.

(e) Refusal of any Sign from Heaven—  
The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. xvi.  
1-12.

**IV. Closing Months of our Lord's Ministry.** xvi. 13-xx.

**1. Near Casarea Philippi.** xvi. 13-28.

Including—

(a) St. Peter's Confession. xvi. 13-20.

(b) **First** Prediction of the Passion ; Peter rebuked.  
xvi. 21-23.



- (c) The Nature of True Discipleship. xvi. 24-28.
2. *The Transfiguration*, and events following. xvii.-xviii.  
Including—
- (a) The Transfiguration. xvii. 1-13.
  - (b) The Lunatic Boy healed. xvii. 14-21.
  - (c) Second Prediction of the Passion. xvii. 22, 23.
  - (d) The Temple Tax. xvii. 24-27.
  - (e) Teaching about True Humility. xviii. 1-6.
  - (f) Teaching about Offences and Forgiveness. xviii. 7-35.
3. *The Journey through Peræa*. xix.-xx.  
Including—
- (a) Teaching about Marriage and Divorce. xix. 1.-12.
  - (b) Little Children brought to Jesus. xix. 13-15.
  - (c) The Rich Young Ruler, Riches, Rewards. xix. 16-30.
  - (d) Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. xx, 1-16.
  - (e) Third Prediction of the Passion. xx. 17-19.
  - (f) Salome and her Sons. xx. 20-28.
  - (g) Departure for Jerusalem. Two blind men healed. xx. 29-34.
- V. **The Holy Week.** xxi.-xxvii.
1. *Sunday*. xxi. 1-11.  
The Entry into Jerusalem.
2. *Monday*. xxi. 12-22.  
Including—
- (a) Cleansing of the Temple. xxi. 12-16.
  - (b) Cursing of the fig tree and its lessons. xxi. 17-22.
3. *Tuesday*. xxi. 23-xxv.  
Including—
- (a) The Question of Authority. xxi. 23-27.
  - (b) Parables of The Two Sons ; The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Marriage of the King's Son. xxi. 28-xxii. 14.
  - (c) The Pharisees and Herodians, and The Tribute Money. xxii. 15-22.
  - (d) The Sadducees and the Resurrection. xxii. 23-33.
  - (e) The Lawyer and the Commandments. xxii. 34-40.
  - (f) Christ's own Question—David's son? xxii. 41-46.



- (g) Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees. xxiii.
- (h) Discourse about (1) The Fall of Jerusalem, and (2) The End of the World. xxiv. 1-44.
- (i) Parables of The Stewards ; The Ten Virgins, and the Talents. xxiv. 45-xxv. 30.
- (k) Description of the Last Judgment. xxv. 31-46.

4. *Wednesday.* xxvi. 1-16.

Including—

- (a) **Fourth** Prediction of the Passion. xxvi 1, 2.
- (b) Meeting of the Sanhedrin. xxvi. 3-5.
- (c) Treachery of Judas, consequent upon the feast at Bethany, which had taken place on the previous Sunday (see John xii. 1-9). xxvi. 6-16.

5. *Thursday and Friday.* xxvi. 17-xxvii.

Including—

- (a) The Last Supper. xxvi. 17-30.
- (b) The Flock shall be scattered. xxvi. 31-35.
- (c) The Agony in the Garden. xxvi. 36-46.
- (d) The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus. xxvi. 47-56.
- (e) The Trial before Caiaphas. xxvi. 57-68.
- (f) The Denial of Peter. xxvi. 69-75.
- (g) The Trial before Pilate. xxvii. 1-30.  
[The death of Judas. xxvii. 3-10.]
- (h) The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus. xxvii. 31-56.
- (i) The Burial. xxvii. 57-66.

VI. **The Resurrection.** xxviii.

- 1. Declared to the Women by an Angel. xxviii. 1-8.
- 2. Appearance of Jesus to the Women. xxviii. 9, 10.
- 3. The Soldiers bribed. 11-15.
- 4. Jesus meets His Disciples in Galilee, and gives them His last Charge. xxviii. 16-20.



## II. Miracles, Parables, Discourses, and Events peculiar to the Gospel of St. Matthew.

**Miracles :** 1. Cure of Two Blind Men. ix. 27-31.

2. Temple Tax provided. xvii. 24-27.

**Parables :** 1. The Tares. xiii. 24-30.

2. The Hid Treasure. xiii. 44.

3. The Pearl of Great Price. xiii. 45, 46.

4. The Draw Net. xiii. 47-50.

5. The unmerciful Servant. xviii. 23-35.

6. The Labourers in the Vineyard. xx. 1-16.

7. The Father and two Sons. xxi. 28-32.

8. The Marriage of the King's Son. xxii. 1-14.

9. The Ten Virgins. xxv. 1-13.

10. The Talents. xxv. 14-30.

**Discourses :** 1. A large portion of the Sermon on the Mount. v.-vii.

2. Invitation to the Weary. xi. 28-30.

3. About Idle Words. xii. 36, 37.

4. Blessing on St. Peter. xvi. 17-19.

5. A considerable part of Discourse on Humility and Forgiveness. xviii.

6. Rejection of the Jews. xxi. 43.

7. A considerable part of the "Woes" on the Scribes and Pharisees. xxiii.

8. Description of the Last Judgment. xxv. 31-46.

9. The Last Charge to the Disciples, and the Promise. xxviii. 18-20.

**Events :** 1. The whole of chapter ii.

2. Peter's Attempt to Walk on the Water. xiv. 28-31.

3. Covenant of Judas for Thirty Pieces of Silver. xxvi. 14-16.

4. Repentance and Death of Judas. xxvii. 3-10.

5. Dream of Pilate's wife. xxvii. 19.

6. Appearance of Saints in Jerusalem. xxvii. 52.

7. The Watch at the Sepulchre. xxvii. 62-66.

8. The Earthquake. xxviii. 2.

9. The Soldiers bribed. xxviii. 11-15



## St. Mark.

### CHURCH RESPECT- RISTICS OF HIS

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minister and helper.<sup>1</sup> He was with them in the Island of Cyprus, and accompanied them into Asia Minor ; but at Perga in Pamphylia he suddenly turned back from the enterprise, so that when Paul and Barnabas were about to undertake their second journey, to revisit the churches of Asia, St. Paul "thought not good to take him with them who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." Barnabas took the part of his kinsman, and in consequence "a very sharp contention" arose between him and Paul, so that they parted company. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, revisited Cyprus, while St. Paul, choosing Silas, began his second great missionary tour.<sup>2</sup>

2. After this the few notices we have of St. Mark are found in the Epistles. A complete reconciliation evidently took place between St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and St. Mark. The latter was with St. Paul in his first imprisonment at Rome<sup>3</sup> and at the time of the Apostle's second imprisonment he was anxious to have Mark with him as "profitable to him for the ministry."<sup>4</sup> St. Mark likewise sends greeting from Babylon, by St. Peter, to the churches of Asia Minor or Palestine, and here we see him on such terms of intimacy and affection with that Apostle that St. Peter calls him "Marcus my son." This visit to Babylon was probably in the interval between St. Paul's two Roman imprisonments.<sup>5</sup>

St. Mark is said traditionally to have become the first Bishop of the Church of Alexandria.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xv. 39, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Col. iv. 10 ; Philem. 24.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12. Babylon, in this verse, is not an allegorical name for Rome, but the famous ruined city on the Euphrates. There was still a considerable population there, and it was the centre of a Jewish theological school.



**Belief of the Early Church respecting St. Mark's Gospel.** It was the universal tradition of the early Church that St. Mark became the companion of St. Peter's latter days, and that he wrote the Gospel bearing his name, probably at Rome, under the guidance or superintendence of the Apostle. He thus preserved by a written record that oral Gospel which he had heard again and again from St. Peter's own lips, and which has given to that record all the vividness of a narrative by an eye-witness.

This tradition is alluded to by early Christian writers. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, who died A.D. 169, says: "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered ; though he did not record in order that which was said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him ; but subsequently, as I said, attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the immediate wants of his hearers, and not making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses." Again, Clement of Alexandria, who died A.D. 220, and who belonged to a church traditionally founded by St. Mark, tells us that "the Gospel according to St. Mark had its origin as follows : that when Peter had publicly preached the Word, and had by the Spirit set forth the Gospel, those who were present, and who were many in number, entreated Mark, as having companied with him for a long time, and remembering the things that he had said, to write out what had thus been spoken, and that he then compiled his Gospel, and gave it to those who had made this request to him." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both these extracts have been preserved to us by Eusebius of Caesarea (*Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 39, vi. 14), who derived his information from men of a still earlier age. Eusebius lived about A.D. 260-340.



**Characteristics of St. Mark's Gospel.** The peculiarities or characteristics which mark the Gospel according to St. Mark confirm this early tradition of the Church, and the belief of most modern Biblical scholars.

1. The points which show that St. Mark, who was neither an eye-witness of our Lord's works, nor a hearer of His words, obtained his information from one who had both seen and heard the Lord.

(a) St. Mark recites the *very words* spoken by our Lord, in the original language (Syro-Aramaic), and translates them, as one would who was writing for people of another tongue.<sup>1</sup>

(b) St. Mark records several minute particulars not recorded by the other Evangelists. It is he who tells us that Jesus was "*with the wild beasts*" in the wilderness;<sup>2</sup> that He was "*in the hinder part of the ship, asleep upon a pillow,*" during the storm on the lake;<sup>3</sup> that the fig-tree, after our Lord's curse, was "*dried up from the roots.*"<sup>4</sup>

(c) St. Mark on several occasions notices the very looks and gestures of our Lord. When He healed the withered hand on the Sabbath day, He looked "*round about*" on the Pharisees "*with anger.*"<sup>5</sup> He "*took up*" the young children "*in His arms,*" when He blessed them.<sup>6</sup>

(d) St. Mark brings out the effect produced by our Lord with remarkable clearness. Frequently he

<sup>1</sup> These words are Boanerges (iii. 17); Talitha cumi (v. 41); Corban (vii. 11); Ephphatha (vii. 34); Gehenna (ix. 43. See margin of R.V.); Abba (xiv. 36); Eloi, etc. (xv. 34). This last is also recorded, and its interpretation given, by St. Matthew (xxvii. 46).

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Mark iv. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xi. 20. See also Mark i. 7, 15, 38, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Mark iii. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Mark x. 16. See also Mark iii. 34; v. 32; viii. 33; ix. 35, 36; x. 23, 32; xi. 11.



notes how the people, and His disciples also, were "*astonished with a great astonishment,*" "*sore amazed in themselves beyond measure and wondered.*"<sup>1</sup>

II. Points which show that St. Mark was writing for Gentile Christians, and when the use of Latin words had, even among Greeks, become common.

(a) He explains Jewish topography and customs. Thus Jordan is said to be a *river*, the Mount of Olives to be *over against the Temple*; "The Preparation" is explained as "*the day before the Sabbath*," and the Sadducees are described as those who "*say there is no resurrection.*"<sup>2</sup>

(b) In his own narrative St. Mark only *thrice* quotes from the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

(c) He introduces several Latin words, as *centurion*,<sup>4</sup> *speculator*, or "soldier of the guard";<sup>5</sup> *sestes*, or *sex-tarius*, a pot,<sup>6</sup> and others.<sup>7</sup>

III. (a) Special mention is made of St. Peter on some occasions, as for instance (1) when he followed our Lord in the morning after the healing of his mother-in-law;<sup>8</sup> (2) when he called our Lord's attention to the withering of the fig-tree;<sup>9</sup> (3) as one of the four who were with our Lord on the Mount of Olives when He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem;<sup>10</sup> and (4) as the one to whom the angel's message after the resurrection was to be specially given.

<sup>1</sup> Mark v. 42; vi. 51. See also Mark i. 22, 27, 33; ii. 12; iii. 10; iv. 41; v. 21, 31; vi. 2, 33, 56; viii. 1; x. 24, 32; and for the effect produced on the evil spirits, see i. 23-26; iii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 5; xiii. 3; xv. 42; xii. 18. See also ii. 18; vii. 3; xi. 13; xiv. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Mark i. 2, 3; xv. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xv. 39, 44, 45.

<sup>5</sup> Mark vi. 27, R.V.

<sup>6</sup> Mark vii. 4, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Quadrantes*, "farthing" (xii. 42); *Denarion*, penny (xii. 15); *Legion* (v. 9, 15); *Pretorium*, "palace" (xv. 16, R.V. marg.). These four words also occur in other parts of the New Testament.

<sup>8</sup> Mark i. 36.

<sup>9</sup> Mark xi. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Mark xiii. 3.



(*b*) On the other hand, details are omitted in which St. Peter bore a part, which the Apostle's own modesty would not improbably lead him to conceal. For instance, his walking on the sea,<sup>1</sup> and the blessing bestowed upon him when he confessed his belief in Jesus as the Son of God.<sup>2</sup>

IV. Other points may be noticed in St. Mark's Gospel, beside those which, as we have seen, illustrate the ancient tradition of his authorship.

(*a*) Whilst St. Mark describes his Gospel as that of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," thus placing the Divinity of our Saviour in the very forefront, he brings out, on the other hand, perhaps more than any other, the true humanity of Jesus Christ. Thus (1) in regard to His human soul, St. Mark tells us that our blessed Lord could *grieve*,<sup>3</sup> could *love*,<sup>4</sup> could be *moved with compassion*, and with righteous anger,<sup>5</sup> and could wonder.<sup>6</sup>

(*b*) St. Mark's use of Hebraisms shows him to have been a Jew.<sup>7</sup>

V. The points we have noticed are sufficient to show that St. Mark's Gospel is not, as some have supposed, a mere abbreviation of St. Matthew's. But in addition to these, there are several interesting particulars of our Lord's ministry mentioned by St. Mark, which are not recorded by St. Matthew, or if noticed are not so fully narrated by him. Amongst these are, the uncovering the roof of the house to let down the paralytic ;<sup>8</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark vi. 50, 51, with Matt. xiv. 28-31.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mark viii. 29, 30, and Matt. xvi. 17-19. Also cf. Mark vii. 17 and Matt. xv. 15 ; Mark ix. 33 and Matt. xvii. 24-27 ; Mark xiv. 13 and Luke xxii. 8 ; and see Luke xxii. 31, 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Sigh* (vii. 34) ; *sigh deeply* (viii. 12).

<sup>4</sup> Mark vi. 34 ; iii. 5 ; viii. 33 ; x. 14.

<sup>7</sup> These occur in Mark vi. 7, 39, 40.

<sup>4</sup> Mark x. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Mark vi. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Mark ii. 4.



interference of our Lord's friends ;<sup>1</sup> the parable of the seed growing secretly ;<sup>2</sup> the healing of a deaf and dumb man of Decapolis,<sup>3</sup> and of a blind man at Bethsaida ;<sup>4</sup> the answer of the scribe ;<sup>5</sup> the account of the young man who followed Christ with a linen cloth about his naked body.<sup>6</sup>

### **General Character of St. Mark's Gospel.**

The four Gospels have been compared to four distinct portraiture of our Lord, each representing Him in a somewhat different aspect.<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew, we have observed, portrays Him more especially as the Christ, the Messiah of Israel ; while in St. Mark's portrait we see the Mighty Lord of Nature—the incarnate Son of God.

To get an impressive view of this latter aspect must be our aim in the study of St. Mark ; and is not any amount of study abundantly repaid if it enable us to form a more distinct conception of Him to know Whom is eternal life ? While reading St. Mark we seem to be almost amongst the eye-witnesses of His ministry. Though He did not ordinarily allow His glory to break through the human tabernacle, yet so full of calm majesty was His presence, that the people when they beheld Him were greatly amazed.<sup>8</sup> Of His words, poured out so freely day after day, amid the hills and plains of Galilee, we have only a few chapters ; but how Divine was that wisdom which prophets and kings desired to hear but waited for in vain ! His works, how wonderful ! the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead raised ;

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Mark iv. 26-29.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vii. 31-37.

<sup>4</sup> Mark viii. 22-26.

<sup>5</sup> Mark xii. 32-34.

<sup>6</sup> Mark xiv. 51. Some suppose that this young man was St. Mark himself. It is impossible to say.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter i., pp. 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> Mark ix. 15.



while the wind and the waves, no less than the powers of darkness, were subject to His bidding. Here was the mystery which the angels desire to look into. Here was a Being perfectly holy, but to Whom men talked as one man talks to another : One Who showed them the kindness of a brother—Who sympathized with them—Who spent His life in doing them good—Who was indeed a perfect man, and yet God ! Infinitely firmer and more majestic than any mere man, He was so meek and gentle that He suffered His foes to do their worst upon Him. And besides all this, the more we reverently study the words and works of our Lord Jesus Christ the more *real* will they seem to us.

When we look at some far-off mountain, half hidden in mist—its outline quite indistinct, its top lost amidst the clouds—it appears to us very shadowy indeed ; but if we go nearer—if we come close to it and climb its sides, and mark its every crag—how boldly it stands out, how large a space it fills in our minds ever after. It is just so when studying the Gospel reverently and in the right spirit. We come, as it were, *nearer to Christ* ; we seem to gaze upon His Divine Person, to hear His holy words, and to look with wondering awe upon His miracles. We follow Him about Galilee, beyond Jordan, through Samaria, over the slopes of Olivet, into the Holy City and the Garden of Gethsemane. We go with Him before the council, to the judgment-hall of Pilate, and still press after Him, until we stand at the foot of the Cross ; then at the empty tomb, and at last on the Mount of Olives, as He, our Master and Lord, is taken up into heaven. In our effort to gain this near and vivid view of our Lord's person as the disciples beheld Him, perhaps no Gospel helps us so much as this Gospel of St. Mark.



Hence, St. Mark's Gospel has been called the Gospel "of service," or "of ministry,"<sup>1</sup> because it does thus so wonderfully describe our Lord as God's holy servant Jesus, engaged in laborious works of love. Yet with it all, He is the Incarnate Son of God—"the Lord of earth and sea and sky"—of all nature.

<sup>1</sup> This character of the Gospel has been traced to St. Peter's influence, "making us feel that it is just such a Gospel as might have rested upon St. Peter's teaching as a groundwork." If St. Peter composed the prayer in Acts iv. 27-30 [where the word "child" (v. 27, A.V.) should be rendered "servant" (as in R.V.)], we seem to have a key to his thoughts about the service or ministry of Jesus Christ.



## *CHAPTER XIV.*

### **The Early Galilean Ministry.**

PROPHECY OF A FORERUNNER — STATE OF THE  
JEWISH NATION—JOHN THE BAPTIST—BAPTISM  
OF JESUS—EASTERN GALILEE—THE GALILEAN  
MINISTRY.

**THE Forerunner** (i. 1-13). St. Mark's Gospel, it has been noticed, is the Gospel of Ministry, just as St. Matthew's may be called "the Gospel of the Kingdom ;" and so, omitting all mention of the birth, infancy, and childhood of our Lord, it enters at once upon the active ministry of Jesus as "the Son of God ;" and we behold Him all through the Gospel as "Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Ghost and with power, Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."<sup>1</sup>

Unlike St. Matthew, who wrote chiefly for Jewish Christians, St. Mark, writing for Gentile believers, makes, as we have seen, reference but seldom to the Old Testament Scriptures, of which his readers would probably have but little knowledge. He begins, however, his Gospel with two quotations from it, "as

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 38.



though once for all to link the Old Testament on to the New, and to show to his Gentile readers that the great things he is about to tell came to pass,"<sup>1</sup> as it was written : "Behold I send my messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee;" "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."<sup>2</sup>

This prophecy of a forerunner was accomplished when John the Baptist came preaching "in the wilderness." To understand how it was that so great a stir was made, and that "there went out unto him all the land of Judæa," and the people of Jerusalem, we must bear in mind that at that time the Jews were groaning under the oppression of the Romans. Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, reigned over Judæa and Samaria after his father's death as King of the Jews ; but he governed so badly that after a few years the Romans deposed him. Since then one Roman governor after another had tyrannized over the country, and Pontius Pilate, who was governor at the time of which we write, was hated more than any of the five who had preceded him.

Now to a proud people like the Jews, despising foreigners, and priding themselves upon being God's chosen people, it was terrible to be under the power of the Gentiles ; but the Romans, who had conquered the world, could not be resisted unless God Himself wrought out a deliverance for His people ; and this was just what they hoped for. Had not God promised them a Deliverer—a Messiah—a Great King Who should sit on David's throne and restore the kingdom

<sup>1</sup> Bishop How, in *Brief Commentary*.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. iii. 1 ; Isa. xl. 3.



to Israel? and were they not in sore need of Him? So year after year they expected Him, but in vain, and it was now four hundred years since Malachi, the last of the prophets, had written of God's messenger who should prepare His way.

This, then, was the state of things, when suddenly a man clothed like the prophets of old came preaching in the wilderness and baptizing in Jordan for the remission of sins. He spoke of a coming "Mightier One," the latchet of Whose shoes he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose, Who should baptize with "the Holy Ghost." This preacher was John the Baptist, the great Forerunner. His voice rang through the land, calling on the people to repent. Multitudes were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. The cry of the Baptist reached that "Mightier One" of Whom John spoke, Who for thirty years had been hidden away amongst the hills of Galilee, the "Carpenter" of Nazareth. It was the signal for Him to quit that solitude and to show Himself to the world. "So Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, John saw the heavens opened,"<sup>1</sup> and as "the Spirit, like a dove," descended upon Him, a Voice from heaven proclaimed Him to be the "BELOVED SON." Then followed that mysterious temptation of our Lord, in his account of which, brief as it is, St. Mark makes use of a stronger word than either of the other Evangelists, when he says that "the Spirit driveth" Him (Jesus) into the wilderness. St. Mark alone tells us, that the Lord "was with the wild beasts" during the forty days He was tempted of the Devil.

<sup>1</sup> Or, more forcibly, "rent asunder," as in R.V.



**The Beginning of the Ministry (i. 14, 15).**

From the Temptation St. Mark passes on at once to our Lord's ministry in Galilee, the northernmost of the three provinces into which Palestine was divided at that time. Jesus preached through all Galilee; but Eastern Galilee was more especially His own country, and the home of His riper years.

The most notable feature of this district, hallowed for all time by the ministry of Jesus Christ within its borders, was the little Sea of Galilee, a beautiful fresh-water lake,<sup>1</sup> deep down in the valley of the Jordan. The blue sky of that southern clime was reflected in its usually tranquil waters, which rippled for the most part upon a level beach of fine white sand, pebbles, and shells. Trees, plants, and flowers,—oaks, walnuts, olives, thickets of thorn, clumps of oleander brilliant with pink blossoms, fields of corn springing green from the scattered seed or ripening into golden grain,—grew on the slopes of the rounded hills that bounded the western shore of the lake. On the eastern side rose the high scarped hills of Bashan; and far in the north were seen the snowy tops of Hermon. The Sea of Galilee, now desolate, was in our Lord's time a busy scene. Morning and evening its surface was covered with boats engaged in taking the fish that swarmed in its waters; and all day long boats were plying with passengers or merchandise from shore to shore. On the western and north-western shore of the lake, or on the neighbouring plains and hill-sides, there were, beside villages, no less than ten large cities, overflowing with wealth and population. On the north-western shore there was Capernaum, our

<sup>1</sup> About twelve miles long and six broad in its widest part. It is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea.



Lord's own city, and within short distances of it, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Magdala, all of them now mere heaps of ruins. Further south there was Tiberias, the stately capital of Herod Antipas, a Roman city on a Galilean lake, built by Roman architects, and named after the Emperor of the Romans. All around was a fertile country of corn-fields and olive-groves, glowing, in the spring time, with innumerable wild flowers of great variety and beauty.

It was into this country of Galilee that Jesus came, as St. Mark tells us, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying: "The time is fulfilled, repent ye and believe the Gospel;" the long delay is at an end—the kingdom of the Messiah, the Son of David, is at hand.<sup>1</sup>

**Call of Four Disciples** (i. 16–20). As Jesus walked on the beach bordering the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, casting a net into the sea; He called them, and at His call they left their nets and followed Him. A little further on Jesus called James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and they left their father Zebedee, with the hired servants, as St. Mark tells us, "and went after Him." We know from St. John<sup>2</sup> that three of these four men were already disciples of Christ, but now they were called to follow Him more closely.

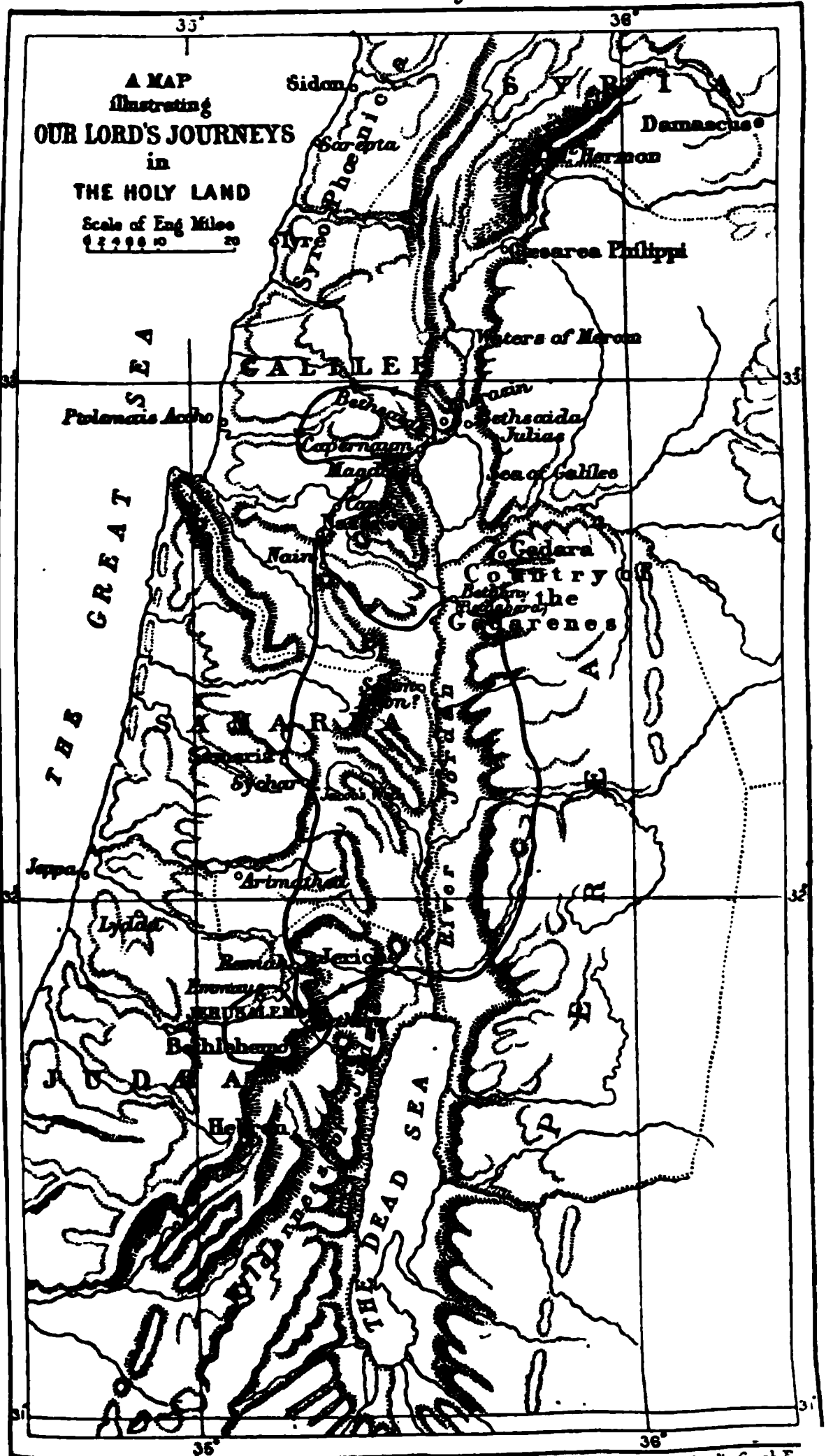
**The Possessed Man healed** (i. 21–28). From the shore of the lake the scene changes to the syna-

<sup>1</sup> Although godly sorrow for sin is the beginning of repentance, as St. Paul teaches us (2 Cor. vii. 10), yet the repentance preached by the Baptist and insisted on by our Lord meant more than this. It meant "*a turning away from sin*," a thorough change of heart, a change from sin to godliness, from evil thoughts and desires to good, from earth to heaven.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 40–42.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey





gogue of Capernaum. Every town at this period of Jewish history had its synagogue, where the people met for public prayers and to hear the Old Testament Scriptures read and expounded. Our Lord made it His custom to read and teach in the synagogues. On this first occasion of His doing so in the synagogue at Capernaum the people were astonished at His doctrine, so different was it to anything they were accustomed to hear from the Scribes, or expounders of the Law. On this occasion also, Jesus showed forth His power as the Almighty Son of God, anointed with the Holy Ghost, the destroyer of the power of the Wicked One. It was the sabbath day, and Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, when suddenly a wild, loud cry startled every one. It was the cry of a man with an unclean spirit; and yet it was not so much his voice as the voice of the evil spirit within him which said, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."<sup>1</sup> But Jesus answered, "Hold thy peace,<sup>2</sup> and come out of him;" and the evil spirit, crying with a loud voice, and convulsing his victim, came out of the man. Then St. Mark tells us, as he often does, of the amazement of the people, and how "they questioned among themselves," and that "straightway"<sup>3</sup> the fame of our Lord's miracles spread through all Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> The "Let us alone" in A.V. is omitted in R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "*Be muzzled*." Our Lord would not accept the witness of the devils, however much they seemed compelled to acknowledge Him.

<sup>3</sup> A favourite word with St. Mark, occurring forty-one times in his Gospel, nine times in this first chapter. In A.V. it is variously translated by "Immediately," "forthwith," etc., but in R.V. uniformly by "straightway."



**Peter's Mother-in-law healed** (i. 29-39).

From the synagogue we follow Jesus to Peter's house, where he healed Peter's wife's mother of a fever, taking her by the hand—lightly, we may suppose, for St. Matthew says, He “touched her hand.” It was the miraculous healing, and not the help, that enabled her to rise and to serve at the sabbath meal.

In the evening, according to Mark's vivid description, “all the city was gathered together at the door.” The fame of the miracle in the synagogue had doubtless caused this excitement amongst the people, who only waited for the setting of the sabbath sun,<sup>1</sup> to crowd round Jesus with all who were diseased, or under the power of the Evil One; and He healed them. So closed this day of wonders.

But how did the next day open? Where was our Lord? and in what way was He engaged? Long before the break of day He had left the sleeping city, and in a “desert place,” in the solitude of Nature where nothing disturbs, He poured out His soul to God. Then throughout all Galilee Jesus preached in the synagogues; for He told His disciples that to do this—to go from place to place preaching, blessing, and healing—“came He forth” from God.

**The Leper Cleansed** (i. 40-45). The healing of the leper, as told by St. Mark, agrees with St. Matthew's account;<sup>2</sup> but from St. Mark we learn in addition that, in the fulness of his heart, he “blazed

<sup>1</sup> To avoid breaking the sabbath, which legally closed at sunset. St. Matthew mentions (viii. 16) that the people went to Christ in the evening. St. Mark and St. Luke (iv. 31) show us the reason why they did so.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. viii. 1-4.



abroad " his miraculous cure, although the Lord had charged him to tell no man of it. The consequence was that Jesus could no longer appear openly in the city, because He was thronged by curious gazers, who hindered His holy work. So He retired to desert places, but even there "they came to Him from every quarter."



## CHAPTER XV.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

THE PARALYTIC—CALL OF ST. MATTHEW—THE SABBATH DAY—ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE—BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST—THE TRUE BRETHREN OF JESUS CHRIST.

**THE Healing of the Paralytic** (ii. 1-12). St.

Mark's account, although it agrees with that of St. Matthew,<sup>1</sup> is fuller, and we learn from it what difficulties were overcome in bringing this afflicted one to the feet of Jesus. Our Lord returned to Capernaum from the desert places, whither He had retired because of the multitudes who thronged Him to see His miracles. No sooner did it become known that He was again in the city than the excitement became as great as ever. The people crowded to the house where He was, so that "there was no room to receive them; no, not so much as about the door." The Lord preached to them probably under the verandah in the square open court, round which it was the Jewish custom to build the house. Many sick people

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 1-8.



were doubtless brought to Him : but one man in particular, paralytic and helpless, and whose mind, no less than his body, needed healing, was borne along on a bed or pallet by four men to the place where the Lord was ; and when they could not come near Him for the press, they uncovered the roof of the verandah, and lowered their burden until it rested at His feet.<sup>1</sup> Nor was the Lord angry at their boldness ; for “when He saw their faith,” He poured out on this man a double blessing ; first forgiving his sins (we cannot, therefore, doubt his penitence, and that the healing of his soul was what he most desired), and then restoring vigour to his body ; so that he was able to arise and take up his bed and depart to his own home,—a living proof that He Who had done this great miracle had likewise “power on earth to forgive sins” in His own Name, and on His own authority. “But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” And had our Lord been a mere man, the Scribes would indeed have been right in saying He blasphemed. Their sin was their pride and obstinacy of heart, which would not allow them to see in Jesus the Christ of the Prophets.

### **The Call of St. Matthew (ii. 13-22). The**

<sup>1</sup> Another explanation is that of the elder Lightfoot :—They ascended by means of a ladder outside the house “upon the housetop.” Then, seeing there was a door in every roof, giving admittance to the roof from the “upper chamber,” and that in this case it was not large enough, they widened the opening by pulling away some of the tiling, and then let the sick man down into the chamber. For Jesus was not in the courtyard, nor most likely in the verandah, but in the upper chamber, where the learned were wont to assemble to discourse of religion. This room was now crowded, so that there was no room, “No, not so much as about the door.”



Levi, son of Alphæus, of St. Mark, is allowed, on all hands, to be the same as St. Matthew. After his call, Matthew made, as it would seem, a farewell entertainment to his friends, and to this he invited the Lord. The act of Jesus Christ in accepting the invitation was followed by the murmuring of the Scribes and Pharisees, because our Lord ate with publicans and sinners. The Pharisees hated Him because He saw through their hypocrisy, and denounced it. They hated Him too because, while He claimed to be the Messiah and Zion's King, He did not spurn the humble and the poor in spirit—fishermen, publicans, sinners; choosing His disciples from them rather than from those who were righteous in their own eyes and wise in their own conceits.

**The Disciples pluck the Ears of Corn** (ii. 23-27). This incident is recorded also both by St. Matthew and St. Luke;<sup>1</sup> but St. Mark alone has preserved to us that most notable saying of our Lord, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Man's highest good is thus placed above the obligation of the sabbath. To save his life, David ate the consecrated bread,<sup>2</sup> but he had never been thought guilty of sacrilege; the priests in the Temple worked on the sabbath day—killing sheep and oxen, drawing water, cleaving wood, lighting fires; but who accused *them* of sabbath-breaking? The Pharisees were thus rebuked and silenced before the people; but this only made them the more angry. They regarded the Lord's words as an attack upon their authority, and determined, lest their influence with the people should soon be at an end, to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 1-8. Luke vi. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xxi. 1-6.



silence by fair means or by foul, Jesus, the Galilean Teacher.

**The Withered Hand healed** (iii. 1-6). The third chapter of St. Mark's Gospel opens with another conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. On the sabbath day our Lord was in the synagogue teaching the people; and there, too, were the Pharisees watching Him. A man with a withered hand was amongst the worshippers. Would Jesus heal him on the sabbath-day? "Is it lawful," He asked, "to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" But they held their peace. Then, as St. Mark alone tells us, our Lord "looked round on them with anger," and restored the withered hand, making it "whole as the other." The Pharisees hastened to take counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.<sup>1</sup>

**Withdrawal of the Lord** (iii. 7-12). Jesus withdrew in consequence to the Sea of Galilee, whither a great multitude followed Him from every quarter—from Jerusalem, from Idumæa,<sup>2</sup> from beyond Jordan, and "they about Tyre and Sidon," cities to the north of Palestine; and the people so rushed upon Him—"for the Lord healed many"—that to escape from them He entered a little ship which His disciples had prepared for Him.

<sup>1</sup> The Herodians were a Jewish political sect, or party, which had attached itself to the fortunes of Herod and his family. They united with the Pharisees and Sadducees to achieve our Lord's destruction. They are mentioned in only three places in the New Testament, viz. Matt. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6; xii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> The Idumæa of St. Mark consisted of the Southern portion of Judæa, which had been overrun by the Edomites during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. They were subdued by the Maccabees about B.C. 130, and incorporated into the Jewish nation. The word only occurs here in the New Testament.



**Ordination of the Twelve** (iii. 13-19). After this our Lord went away into the hill country and ordained His twelve Apostles, who henceforth would be constantly with Him, to help Him in His work of ministry.

**The Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost** (iii. 22-30). The Scribes and Pharisees, who were still watching Jesus, next accused Him of casting out devils "by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," thus ascribing works done by the power of God—by the Holy Spirit—to the Wicked One. This drew from our Lord the solemn warning, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost "hath never forgiveness," because, as St. Mark informs us, "they said He had an unclean spirit." Our Lord's meaning, it has been supposed, was that he who blasphemed the Son of Man while veiling His Divinity might be pardoned; but he who blasphemed Him when revealing His Divinity by the power of the Spirit could not be forgiven.<sup>1</sup>

**The True Brethren of Jesus Christ** (iii. 20, 21, 31-35). The house in which these solemn words were spoken was crowded with people. Our Lord and His Apostles "could not so much as eat bread." News seems to have been conveyed to Nazareth of all that was going on. His friends, determined to put a stop to what they regarded as the acts of a madman, started at once, in the early morning, as we may suppose, from Nazareth, and arrived at Capernaum whilst the discourse which we have just noticed was going on. As soon as there was a pause the people around told Jesus that His mother and His brethren were seeking for Him. But the time had come for our

<sup>1</sup> This is the explanation suggested by St. Athanasius.—Ed.



Lord to tell them that from henceforth there was something more important than mere earthly relationship, however close or however dear. He could no longer recognize any such relationship, which was not cemented by a spiritual bond—the bond of striving to do the will of the same Heavenly Father. All who thus strove were His true “brethren and sisters and mother.”



## CHAPTER XVI.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

TEACHING BY PARABLES : STILLING OF THE TEM-  
PEST—THE GADARENE DEMONIAK—RAISING OF  
JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.

**T**EACHING by Parables (iv. 1-34). We have already seen Jesus ministering to the people by the Sea of Galilee,<sup>1</sup> and now "He began again" to teach them, speaking to them in parables as He sat in a boat by the water's edge while a great multitude stood along the shore listening to Him. The same thing is told us by St. Matthew and St. Luke.<sup>2</sup> The same parables are often recorded by all three Evangelists. We have an instance of this in the parable of the sower, and in each account we read of the seed falling on the wayside, on the stony ground, among thorns, and on good ground. Jesus constantly referred to the things around Him to illustrate and to make plain the truths He taught. The lilies, the trees, the flowers, the birds of the air, the fishermen or the husbandmen, are each made by turn to serve His purpose. Familiar things close at hand probably suggested to our Lord's mind the parable of the sower.

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiii. 1-9; Luke viii. 4-15.



**Parable of the Sower** (iv. 3-20). A recent traveller noticed on the shore of the Sea of Galilee just such scenery and just such objects as Jesus may have had around Him on this occasion. "There," he says, "was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it, or upon it; itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and mule and human feet. There was the 'good' rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that plain" (the plain of Gennesaret) "and its neighbourhood from the bare hills descending elsewhere into the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hill-side, protruding here and there through the corn-fields, as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn . . . springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat."<sup>1</sup> If we picture to ourselves the blue lake with the boat resting upon it, in which sat Jesus and His disciples; and the white sandy beach with the multitude of listening people eagerly pressing one another to the water's edge, we have the whole scene before us. Jesus Himself explained the parable of the sower. The four places on which the seed fell—the wayside, the stony ground, the thorns, the good ground—represent four states of the human heart;—the hard heart, into which the word cannot penetrate; the shallow heart, without depth and without reality; the worldly heart, divided between God and "the lusts of other things;" and lastly, the heart prepared by God's grace—the "good ground," where the seed "*sprang*

<sup>1</sup> DEAN STANLEY'S *Sinai and Palestine*.



*up and increased*" and brought forth thirty, sixty, or one hundred fold. The expression "sprang up and increased," given only by St. Mark, taken together with the parable of "the seed growing secretly," which is also found only in St. Mark's Gospel, shows possibly "that the growth of the spiritual life may have been a doctrine much prized by St. Mark, and possibly also a doctrine thus prized by him because holding a forward place in the teaching of St. Peter."

**Proverbial Sayings** (iv. 21-25). These were evidently intended by our Lord (1) to instruct His disciples, in their relation to Him, as teachers subordinate to Him, how they should use the light kindled by Him in the candlesticks of their hearts, and (2) to warn them that in proportion to their faithfulness in receiving and imparting His teaching would be their own advance in spiritual truth.<sup>1</sup>

**The Seed growing Secretly** (iv. 26-29). In the beautiful parable of the seed growing secretly there is portrayed the gradual growth of the spiritual life—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. As it is the only parable peculiar to St. Mark it will be well to give it a brief consideration.

"So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."

This parable shows, then, that the spiritual life in the heart of man has a gradual and orderly growth, like the plants and trees of the natural world; and that just as "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," the Divine seed will grow of itself and bear fruit, if

<sup>1</sup> See also chap. xxx., p. 251.



we only receive it into "an honest and good heart," one prepared by Divine grace, and choke it not nor hinder it by worldliness, sinfulness and neglect.

But this is not all: the growth and progress of the universal Church is also shadowed forth in this parable.

At His first coming the Lord planted His universal Church in the world, and then left it without His *visible* interference. The Divine seed is to grow and increase and come to perfection, and then, when the harvest of the earth is ripe, the Lord will return with His reapers.

**The Mustard Seed** (iv. 30-32). This parable, like the draw-net of St. Matthew, shows that not only the increase of the Church but that its *unity* was part of the intention of its Divine Founder. "The mustard-tree, however many branches it may have, is one tree developed out of one seed. The draw-net, however many meshes it may have, is but one net."<sup>1</sup>

**The Stilling of the Tempest** (iv. 35-41). St. Mark's account of this miracle is fuller than those of St. Matthew and St. Luke.<sup>2</sup> On the evening of the day on which our Lord had spoken so many parables, He crossed over with His disciples to the other side of the lake, that is, to the eastern shore opposite to Capernaum, where He had been teaching. Their departure seems to have been rather hurried, for "they took Him even as He was," without refreshment, into the ship. It was no wonder that when the storm came upon them, Jesus, whose human body was subject to fatigue like our own, should be found "in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow,"<sup>3</sup>

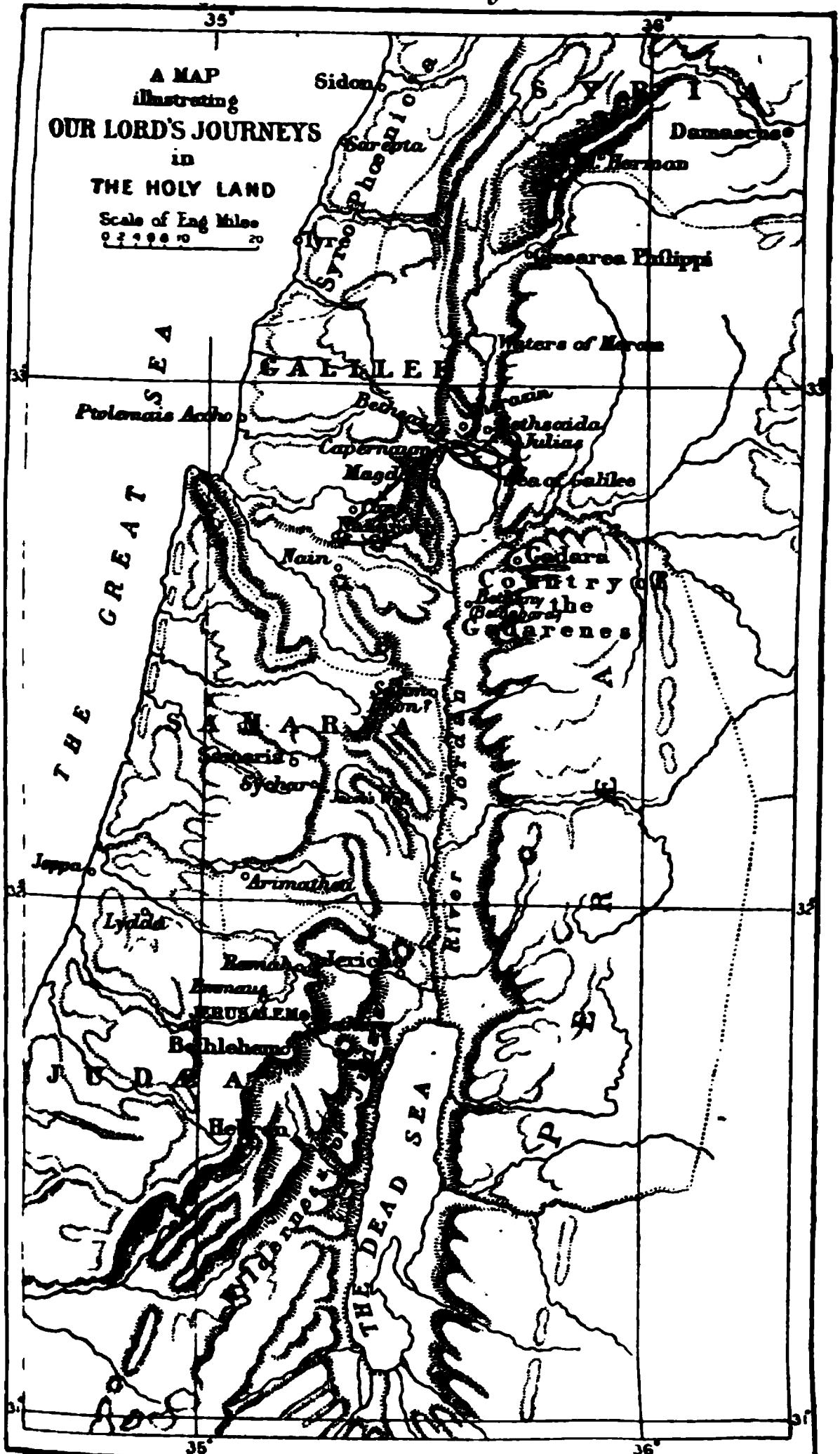
<sup>1</sup> Dean Goulburn.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. viii. 23-27; Luke viii. 22-25.

<sup>3</sup> Or, "the cushion," *i.e.* of the steersman.—R.V.



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey





as St. Mark so graphically tells us. From him, too, alone we learn the very words of the Lord's rebuke to the winds and waves—"Peace, be still;" and the effect produced upon the ship's crew. "They feared exceedingly" when they saw the power of their Divine Master, and noted how "even the wind and the sea obey Him."

**The Gadarene Demoniac** (v. 1-20). St. Mark's account of this miracle also is the fullest and most striking.<sup>1</sup> Landing next morning at the north-east corner of the Sea of Galilee, in "the country of the Gadarenes"<sup>2</sup> Jesus and His disciples were met by a being from the tombs or caves cut in the rock on the hill-side, who came rushing down upon them more like a wild beast than a man,—naked, fierce, terrible. He was a demoniac—a man possessed by devils—the terror of every one who dared to pass that way.<sup>3</sup> No chains could bind him, no fetters were strong enough to hold him. He was fearful to look upon as he approached our Lord and fell down before Him, crying out with a loud voice and saying, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not." How vividly is the scene put before us—the calm answer of Jesus—the rush of the herd of swine<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark v. 1-20 with Matt. viii. 28-34; Luke viii. 26-39.

<sup>2</sup> The reading "Gerasenes" is now more generally accepted as the true one. See R.V. The ruins of a city called Kersa, or Gersa, on a site answering to the conditions of the miracle, were found by Dr. Thompson. Gadara, however, was the capital of the district, which was therefore called by its name. Another reading, "Gergesenes," is really the same as "Gerasenes."

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew mentions two demoniacs, evidencing an eye-witness. One of the two came more into prominence than the other, and hence St. Mark and St. Luke speak of but one.

<sup>4</sup> St. Mark alone mentions the number, "about two thousand." The



—the flight of their keepers—the man so long grievously tormented by devils “sitting and clothed and in his right mind”—the excitement and awe of the townspeople, who begged Jesus to leave them—the rescued man following Him to the boat and praying not to be separated from Him—the departure of the Lord and His disciples ; while “he who lately uttered hideous cries which scared all who came near, now told wondering ears the blessed news of a Deliverer.”

**The Daughter of Jairus** (v. 21-24 ; 35-43). No sooner was their boat seen approaching the shore near Capernaum than the people crowded down to the water's edge. Amongst these was Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, in trouble for his little daughter, whom he had left at the point of death, so that he might now say she “is even now dead.<sup>1</sup> But his faith was strong enough to believe that Jesus could restore her to life : “I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands upon her, and she shall live.” Before our Lord reached the house, messengers came to tell Jairus that his daughter was dead ; but her death, like the death afterwards of Lazarus, was for the glory of God, and the Lord spoke to Jairus the comforting words, “Be not afraid, only believe.” Beside the parents, Jesus permitted only three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, to follow him into the chamber of death. Jesus took the little girl by the hand, and using a term of endearment, exclaimed, “*Talitha, cumi,*” “My child, arise !” And she arose and

word “legion,” describing the terrible nature of the possession in this case, is put for a large number. It was really the name for a regiment in the Roman Army, and numbered from three thousand to six thousand men.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 18. St. Matthew's “even now dead” is seemingly a blending, for conciseness' sake, of the father's and the servants' words.



walked. St. Mark here repeats the very words used by the Lord, as he had often heard them no doubt from the Apostle Peter.

**The Woman with the Issue of Blood** (v. 25-34). Interrupting the raising of the young girl was the healing of the poor woman, who touched the hem of Christ's garment. This miracle is specially interesting, because it shows us that, even when, to all outward seeming, the Lord was unconscious of what was going on, He knew it all, and was permitting the healing virtue to go forth from Him to heal the sufferer. However mistaken the woman's notions were, as to the Lord's power of healing, she had faith in Him, and this faith had its reward. It had indeed worked wonders. It had enabled her to overcome the thought of her ceremonial uncleanness; it had subdued the nervous trembling which was agitating her whole frame, and finally had given her courage to bear the inquisitive stare of the crowd, whilst she "told Him all the truth." She had indeed "touched" the Lord, whilst the multitude had but thronged Him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23, note 2.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

SECOND VISIT TO NAZARETH—FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND—JOURNEY INTO PHENICIA—FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND.

**S**ECOND Visit to Nazareth (vi. 1-6). Jesus Christ our Lord was “brought up”<sup>1</sup> at Nazareth. It was not till he was “about thirty years of age”<sup>2</sup> that He left the home of His youth for the scenes of His Baptism and Temptation. After those events, our Lord began His public ministry. The history of its first two or three months is given us by St. John. Then came the visit to Nazareth, recorded by St. Luke.<sup>3</sup> On that occasion, as we know, Jesus was rejected by His own country people. Some eight or nine months later He again visited Nazareth. This visit is recorded both by St. Matthew<sup>4</sup> and St. Mark. The fame of our Lord’s miracles had no doubt preceded Him.

Yet, even so, the people were as little prepared to receive Him, as they had been on the former occasion. He went, as before, to the synagogue on the sabbath

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 16-30.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iii. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xiii. 53-58.



day, and began to teach. If the old fury, which had been lulled possibly by the report of the wonderful works of Christ in other places, was not again aroused the evil spirit of unbelief was still at work. They were scandalized at the thought that One whom they had known as "the Carpenter," the Son of humble parents, as they thought, and the Brother of men<sup>1</sup> who were still following their trade amongst them, should set up to be a Teacher and a Worker of miracles. No proof of "gracious words" or of "mighty works" availed to overcome their unbelief. A lesser teacher would perhaps have tried to overcome this passive opposition by working greater and still greater wonders. But not so our blessed Lord. St. Mark plainly says, "He *could* there do no mighty work." Want of faith on the part of those to whom he went, was clearly a hindrance to Jesus Christ. Even He Himself " marvelled," St. Mark says, "because of their unbelief." But the Word of God is not bound. It is never idle. Rejected by one, it is offered to another.<sup>2</sup> Our Saviour soon left Nazareth, and "went round about the villages teaching."

**Mission of the Twelve** (vi. 7-16). It would seem that this little tour was taken alone. Our Lord appears to have embraced it as an opportunity for sending out His Apostles upon a mission by themselves. Perhaps it was to give them confidence, or to afford them a glimpse of the magnitude and difficulty of the work to which they had been called, that He thus sent them. They would learn, too, that even in absence, their Lord's power was present with

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Acts xiii. 26.



them. Jesus gave them a short charge,<sup>1</sup> and for safety's sake, and as a help to each other, He appointed them to go two and two.

This first organization, if so we may term it, of Christian missions, had a marked effect. Through the preaching of the Apostles, as well as of His own, the circle of the Lord's fame and influence was greatly enlarged. Reports of what was going on reached even Herod on the far side of Jordan. "It is John," he said, "whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead."

**The Death of John the Baptist** (vi. 17-29). To account for Herod's remark, St. Mark now goes back in his narrative, and gives us the history of the Baptist's cruel and violent death. It was the result, as we know, of his faithful remonstrance with Herod upon his immoral conduct. Not that Herod himself would have killed John, but the savage hatred to the man of God of the partner of his guilt proved too strong for the king's feeble and weak conscience. Herodias determined that John should die, and she made her daughter's success in an immodest exhibition the occasion of accomplishing her revenge.

**Return of the Twelve** (vi. 30-32). After a short and most successful mission, which lasted probably only a few days, the Apostles<sup>2</sup> returned to Jesus Christ, and told Him all they had done. They seem to have brought the news of the Baptist's death. Their Master invited them to retire with Him to some "desert place," where they might obtain the spiritual

<sup>1</sup> In verse 8 the word "scrip" means a "bag," made of leather carried over the shoulder, and used for carrying food, etc. Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> This passage (Mark vi. 30) is the only one in which St. Mark mentions the Twelve by the distinctive title of "Apostles."

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xiv. 13.



and bodily refreshment they and He Himself needed after their round of teaching and healing. For this purpose of retirement the whole of the little party crossed the lake to the eastern side.

**Feeding of the Five Thousand** (vi. 33-44). But neither here could rest and solitude be had.

No sooner did the people see them depart than they hastened on foot six miles round the head of the lake, and crossing the Jordan, met our Lord on the other side, so that in a little while a great multitude had come together. And Jesus taught them, and then, before more than five thousand witnesses, He showed His creative power, multiplying the five loaves and the two fishes, until the people, as they sat "in ranks by hundreds and fifties" on the slopes of the hills of Bashan, or upon the rich plain of Bethsaida Julias, all ate and were satisfied, and the twelve disciples filled each one his basket with the fragments.

**The Walking on the Sea** (vi. 45-52). After the miracle, Jesus Christ sent away the multitude, having first of all "constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side." He then retired to a mountain to pray. But he knew the toilsome work in which the disciples were engaged, struggling all night in the midst of a boisterous sea against a contrary wind. Towards morning their Master joined them. They were affrighted as they saw His figure approaching them, walking calmly on the rough waters, and still more were they amazed when upon the Lord coming up unto them into the ship, the wind ceased. Even they had as yet only partly learned to trust their Master, for "their hearts were hardened."

**Works of Mercy** (vi. 53-56). The news of the



return to the western shore soon spread ; crowds again collected, hovering around our blessed Lord as He made His way through the country towns and villages, and bringing with them a number of their sick folk, all of whom were healed. There is, perhaps, no passage in the Gospels which so vividly and touchingly brings before us the daily life of our Lord and His Apostles as the latter part of the sixth chapter of St. Mark. How wonderful His care for His Apostles, His love for the shepherdless people, His readiness to permit "virtue to go out of Him" to heal the sick.

**The Pharisees and their Traditions** (vii. 1-23). But Jesus Christ was not to be permitted long to work and labour amid the affectionate devotion of the Galilean peasantry. Emissaries of the Pharisees and Scribes soon came from Jerusalem, and brought fresh charges against the Lord. "Why," said they, "walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders,<sup>1</sup> but eat bread with unwashen hands?" His answer for a time silenced them. What were they to bring accusations against Him, when all the time they were making the Word of God of none effect by their tradition. And then, turning to the people, Jesus solemnly called upon them to listen whilst He explained to them that defilement does not come from outward things, but is from within, from the heart.<sup>2</sup>

**The Syrophenician Woman**<sup>3</sup> (vii. 24-30).

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The explanations given by St. Mark in ver. 4 of this chapter confirm the tradition that his gospel was written for those who were unacquainted with Palestine. The word "*Corban*" in ver. 11 means an offering of any kind to God, especially one made in fulfilment of a vow.

<sup>3</sup> Syrophenicia was a narrow strip of territory extending along the Mediterranean Sea northwards for about one hundred miles beyond the boundary of the Holy Land.



The opposition raised against Him by these Pharisees and Scribes seems to have compelled our Lord to leave Galilee for a short time, and for the first time in His ministry to go into the heathen territory of Tyre and Sidon. Here he yielded to the entreaties of the Gentile mother, grieving over the sad condition of her daughter. Our Lord's prolonged hesitation, if so we may call it, before he granted the woman's request, is scarcely to be explained only by the desire to draw out and strengthen her faith. It is in strict accord with His charge to the Twelve,<sup>1</sup> and teaches us that whilst the founding of His Church was to be the work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's own especial work was one of suffering, even unto death, of suffering which alone should make the foundation possible. He abstained, therefore, from making converts from heathenism. How differently all ordinary teachers would have acted.

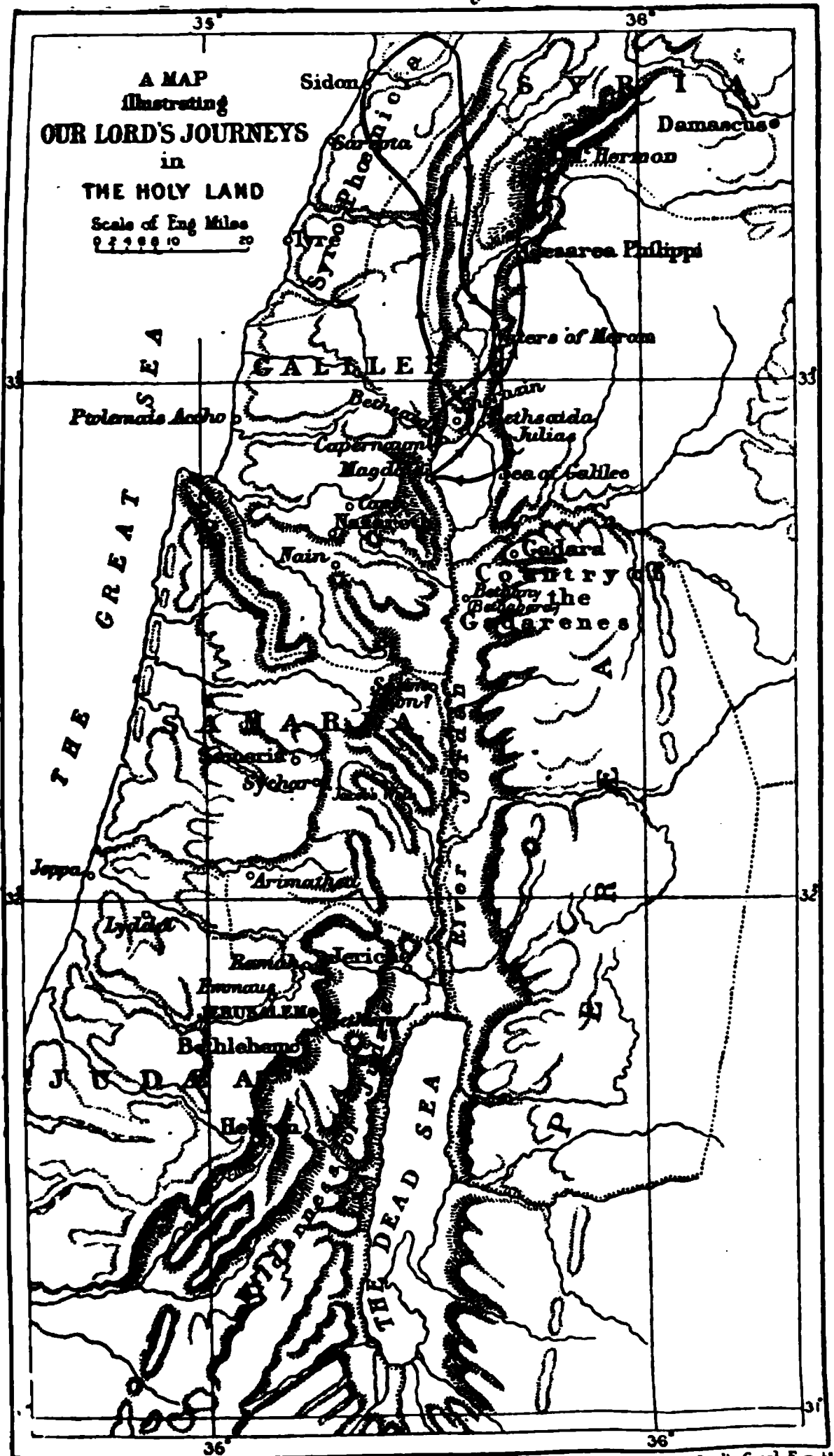
**Healing of the Deaf Mute** (vii. 31-37). Our Lord appears to have extended His journey on this occasion to the northern part of Phœnicia, passing on His way through the great city of Sidon,<sup>2</sup> a seat of the ancient Baal worship. His route then was across the slopes of Lebanon to the upper waters of the Jordan, and thence by its eastern bank to the district of Decapolis and so to the sea of Galilee. The whole of this journey was more or less through a heathen population. Even on the east side of the Sea of Galilee there were many heathen. St. Mark, and he alone of the Evangelists, tells us of a miraculous healing of a deaf man "who had an impediment in his speech,"

<sup>1</sup> Matt x. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The reading in ver. 31—"He came *through Sidon*"—is supported by some of the best MSS., and is adopted by the R.V.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Journey





towards the end of this journey. The healing of this man was one of those miracles of our Lord in which He Who "ordereth all things by the word of His power," laid a certain restraint upon Himself. Instead of healing with a word, the process was accompanied by signs and actions, all calculated to draw out the faith and intelligence of one whose powers of intercourse with the outer world were limited to the two faculties of sight and feeling. It is ever so ; the Lord knows best how to deal with men, whilst they perhaps are murmuring, impatient at delay. Yet in the end the acknowledgment comes, as it did from the half-heathen bystanders now : "He hath done all things well." And their hearts went out towards the great Healer. "They glorified the God of Israel."

**Feeding of the Four Thousand** (viii. 1-9)

This miracle was no doubt wrought in the same neighbourhood as the previous one, on the eastern side of the lake of Galilee, and probably in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida Julias. Excited by the reports of the friends of the deaf mute, a great multitude gathered around the Lord. His compassion for them was aroused, and exerting, as once before, His power, He fed them with such bread as was at hand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of feeding the five thousand, the baskets used were really leathern pouches or wallets. On this occasion they were of a much larger description, and made of wicker work, something after the fashion of a modern hamper. Such an one was used by St. Paul (Acts ix. 25). See p. 48, note 1.



**NOTES.****A. The Brethren of the Lord.**

These persons are mentioned six times in the New Testament :

1. John ii. 12. After the miracle at Cana, they accompany our Lord to Capernaum.
2. Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. 19. They, with the Virgin Mary, come to Capernaum, desiring to speak with Jesus.
3. Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. On the occasion of our Lord's second visit to Nazareth, they are mentioned, with His sisters, as being well-known people in the town.
4. John vii. 3, 5. They urge our Lord to show Himself to the world. At this time they did not believe in Him.
5. Acts i. 14. They are mentioned as believers, and as being in company with the Apostles, from whom they are distinguished.
6. 1 Cor. ix. 5. They are mentioned by St. Paul, who claims their example, as sanctioning his right, if he so chose, to marry a Christian woman.

Beside these notices, one of them, James, is mentioned by St. Paul (Gal. i. 19). He was then occupying the high rank of Bishop of the Jerusalem Church (cf. Acts xii. 17; xv. 13).

Whose these brethren were has been much disputed. Three main theories have been started :—

(a) They were the actual sons of Joseph and Mary. This explanation was started by Helvidius in the fourth century, but it has been generally repugnant to the feeling of the Christian Church.

(b) They were the sons of Alphæus and Mary, the Virgin's sister. This theory was started by Jerome in opposition to Helvidius. It would make them not literally brethren, but cousins only of our Lord. Beside the unlikely assumption that two sisters would have the same name, this theory, which would make three of the brethren Apostles, is inconsistent with John vii. 5, xix. 26, 27, and Acts i. 14.

(c) They were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. Tradition says that of this marriage there were four sons and two daughters. This theory respects the almost universal feeling of the Church, contradicts no passage of Scripture, and on the whole is the most likely to be correct. It was first maintained by Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, about A.D. 367.



**B. Tradition of the Elders.**

By the elders, St. Mark means their ancestors. The tradition was the oral exposition of the old Testament Scriptures handed down from earlier times, and regarded by the Pharisees as of more importance than the Scripture itself. The traditions were not reduced to writing until the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era. The volume containing them, called the Talmud, consists of the "Mishna," or collection of traditions, and the "Gemara," a supplement to and commentary upon the Mishna.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

THE SIGN FROM HEAVEN—THE BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA JULIAS—ST. PETER'S CONFESSION NEAR CÆSAREA PHILIPPI—THE TRANSFIGURATION—THE DEMONIAK BOY—RETURN TO GALILEE.

#### **THE Pharisees at Dalmanutha** (viii. 10-13).

Once again our Lord crossed over to Galilee, landing in the neighbourhood of Dalmanutha, not far from Magdala, a town on the sea-shore, near the southern end of the plain of Gennesaret. Here the Pharisees, accompanied in an unholy alliance, as St. Matthew tells us,<sup>1</sup> by their opponents the Sadducees, made another attack upon Him, in the old spirit of enmity, hardness of heart, and unbelief. Unconvinced by His miracles, the fame of which had spread through the whole country side, troubling even the guilty Herod, these crafty men, in allusion to Daniel's prophecy "of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven,"<sup>2</sup> demanded "a sign from heaven." Requests so made were never answered by our Lord. To an "adulterous" generation—one, that is, unfaithful to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Dan. vii. 13.



God—no sign could be given. Yet the necessity of refusing their request, and their spirit of opposition to His teaching affected our blessed Lord very greatly. “He sighed,” as St. Mark tells us, “deeply in His spirit.”

**The Caution to the Disciples** (viii. 14-21). Leaving these questioners, our Lord and His Apostles crossed over to the north-eastern corner of the lake. The little voyage took, perhaps, some five or six hours, long enough to cause, as seems probable, some trouble in the disciples’ minds as to their provisions. The Lord, to lead their minds to higher thoughts, cautioned them to beware of the leaven of those whom they had just left. Their simple minds misunderstood their Master, but at last, when He had reminded them of His late miracles, His meaning, as St. Matthew tells us, flashed upon them.<sup>1</sup>

**Healing of a Blind Man** (viii. 22-27). On the Lord’s arrival at Bethsaida Julias, a blind man was brought to Him for cure. The miracle is recorded only by St. Mark. It was *progressive*, the sight being bestowed by degrees. The case seems to have been similar in some respects to that of the deaf man healed not long before. The treatment adopted by our Lord was, we may be sure, necessitated by the spiritual, quite as much as by the physical, needs of the sufferers.

**The Great Confession of St. Peter** (viii. 27-30). Our Lord and His Apostles now bent their footsteps northward, in the direction of Cæsarea Philippi. This city had been rebuilt by Herod the

<sup>1</sup> The repetition of the word “leaven” marks two classes of teaching against which our Lord cautioned the Apostles. Comparing Matt. xvi. 1 with Mark viii. 15, it would seem that there was a close connection between the Sadducees and the party of Herod.



Great, and further improved by Herod Philip, who named it partly after the Emperor of Rome and partly after himself. It looked out upon the plain of Merom, and it was surrounded by the most beautiful scenery in Palestine. On every side of it were groves of oaks and olives, and probably, as now, thickets of hawthorn, myrtle, and acacia.

St. Mark has recorded some of our Lord's teachings on the way thither—how His question "Whom do men say that I am?" drew forth St. Peter's memorable confession, "Thou art the Christ!" But St. Mark omits all mention of the blessing bestowed on St. Peter by his Divine Master; and this reticence is interesting, if we are right in believing that St. Peter's narrative formed the groundwork of St. Mark's Gospel.

Why, may we suppose, did Jesus charge His disciples to tell no man that He was the Christ? The reason appears to have been, "that our Lord's time was not yet come, and that expectations were not to be raised among those who would have sought to realize them in tumults and popular excitement."<sup>1</sup>

**First Announcement of Suffering** (viii. 31-33). Our Lord began now seriously to check the passionately cherished longing of even His own disciples for a triumphant Messiah, and to accustom their minds to what was so staggering to their faith—the doctrine of a suffering and crucified Saviour, and of a kingdom which was not of this world. Undoubtedly this revelation appeared all the more strange to them, just after they had made confession of His Divine sonship. That it was needful is evident from the way in which St. Peter took the announcement, and from the stern rebuke administered to him by his Master.

<sup>1</sup> BISHOP ELLICOTT, *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord*.



**Conditions of Discipleship** (viii. 34—ix. 1). An expectation seems to have spread abroad of some new manifestation of power about to be given by Jesus Christ. To check any sudden or unreasoning enthusiasm on the part of the people, our Lord called together both His disciples and the multitude, and explained to them the conditions of true discipleship. He made no offer to them of worldly advancement. On the contrary, to follow Him might necessitate the abandonment of even cherished family relationships. The cross once taken must be carried firmly and bravely.

The discourse concluded with an assurance that some of those who heard Him should live to see "the kingdom of God come with power." The interpretation of this prophecy has perplexed many. It had, in reality, a progressive fulfilment. There was first the Transfiguration, which happening a week afterwards, afforded the three chosen witnesses a foretaste of the glory of the Messiah's kingdom; then there was a still closer accomplishment of the prophecy when Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, was destroyed by the Romans, when the temple services ceased for ever, and an end was put to the Jewish polity and the elder dispensation. But we wait for the entire fulfilment. Every deep stirring of men's hearts, such as was the overthrow of the Roman Empire, or the Reformation, or the great French Revolution, may be said to be a coming of the Son of man with power, inasmuch as it witnesses to God's moral and spiritual government of the world. All such events are earnest of the great final event, when all shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and our Lord's words receive their final accomplishment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That we may thus carry our thoughts onward to the final consum-



**The Transfiguration** (ix. 2-10). After six days, Jesus, taking with Him Peter and James and John, ascended a high mountain,<sup>1</sup> and was transfigured before them. St. Matthew's account of this we have already considered ; but we owe to St. Mark some additional touches. He says : " He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding *white as snow ; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*"<sup>2</sup> And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses : and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. *For he wist not what he said ;* for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them : and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son : hear Him." But as the disciples beheld all this in wondering awe the scene changed, and Jesus was once more alone with them. It may add an interest to St. Mark's description of this great event to remember that he has very possibly made use of St. Peter's own words—the words of an eye-witness.<sup>3</sup>

**The Question about Elijah** (ix. 11-13). On the next day, as they came down from the mountain, Jesus made to the three a second announcement of His resurrection. Not understanding Him, and not daring to ask Him, they seem to have conversed with

mation seems clear from John viii. 51, 52, with which we may compare Heb. ii. 9.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 52, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The italics mark the peculiarities of our Evangelist. See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> For the deep impression made by the Transfiguration upon the Apostles, see how St. Peter, when an old man, speaks of it (2 Pet. i. 16-18), and compare St. John's probable allusion to it in John i. 14.



one another for a while. Out of this conversation arose a further difficulty about Malachi's prophecy of the coming of Elijah.<sup>1</sup> "Why," they ventured to ask, "say the scribes that Elias must first come?" They were perplexed about it; for they had just seen Elijah with the Lord, and he was gone: was this all they were to see of him? And Jesus "answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; . . . but I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come." Thus He explained to them that Elijah had indeed come in spirit in the person of John the Baptist.<sup>2</sup>

### **Healing of the Demoniac Boy (ix. 14-29).**

So Jesus and the three Apostles left the Mount of Glory and all the wonders of the Transfiguration, to join the other disciples. A very different scene awaited them, which St. Mark brings before us very vividly. Our Lord had already given His disciples power over unclean spirits;<sup>3</sup> but when in His absence their aid was asked in the case of the demoniac boy, they were unexpectedly powerless, and exposed to the mockery of the ever-watchful enemies of their Divine Master. In their perplexity Jesus Himself appeared amongst them, and straightway, as St. Mark alone mentions, all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed; or, as the words imply, beheld Him with awe and wonder, occasioned, may we not suppose, by some lingering trace of the Transfiguration glory beaming from His Person or countenance.

Sorrowfully rebuking the general want of faith, our Lord commanded the sufferer to be brought to Him. Then followed the terror of the evil spirit at the presence of the Holy One—the foaming and wallowing of its victim—the cry of the father, faithful even in his

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iv. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. xi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vi 7.



doubts—the crowding round of the multitude—the Lord's word of authority—"I charge thee"—the dread cry of the departing spirit—the deathlike swoon of him who had so long been its victim—the power of our Lord's uplifting and healing hand, showing that it was indeed the hand of the all-powerful incarnate Son of God !<sup>1</sup>

**Our Lord's Second Announcement of His sufferings** (ix. 30-32). From the scene of the last miracle Jesus returned to Galilee. It was to be His final visit. The close of His ministry in the northern parts of the Holy Land was marked by very solemn teaching. Of this, the Evangelists have, it would seem, given us a selection. No point probably struck the Evangelists in after years more forcibly than the frequency with which the Lord warned His Apostles of His approaching sufferings. He did it for a second time, they tell us, on this return to Galilee, though as yet the disciples did not understand His meaning. But when all came to pass, then they remembered and understood.

**Lesson in Charity** (ix. 33-37). This was given at Capernaum, and was necessitated by the disputes amongst themselves as to which of the twelve should be the greater. Our Lord made a little child the medium of His instruction, and to enforce His lesson took the child, as St. Mark alone tells us, "in His arms"—a detail this which speaks to us silently and forcibly of the Redeemer's love and tenderness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The coherence of the narrative is less clear in St. Mark than in St. Matthew. In the latter, our Lord drew two lessons from the child, (1) One of humility, (2) One of tenderness and consideration. St. Mark gives only the second.



**Lesson in Toleration** (ix. 38–50). The Lord's words suggested to St. John some misgiving as to the course he and his brethren had taken a little while before. They had rebuked an exorcist, who would not join them. They had done it with the best intention, and with a keen sense of what was due to their Master. But were they right? For an answer, St. John appealed to our Lord. The answer was clear and decisive. There must be no party spirit. So long as there was allegiance to Christ, expressed or silent, there should be toleration. The smallest act of kindness or of charity, done in the name, not of Christ only, but even of a disciple, was to be allowed, and should have, its reward. On the other hand, let them beware of anything which should corrupt their own faith, or cause them to put a stumbling-block in the way of others. They were the salt of the earth. But they, too, must be salted with the fire of self-sacrifice. Then their striving would not be for the first place, but for peace. Otherwise, they would become fit for nothing.<sup>1</sup>

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NOTES.

A. On the Transfiguration.

1. "*White as snow: so as no fuller,*" etc. (ix. 3). "St. Mark borrows one image from the world of nature, another from that of man's art and device; struggling by aid of these to set forth and reproduce for his readers the transcendent brightness of that light which now arrayed, and from head to foot, the person of the Lord, breaking forth from within, and overflowing the very garments that He wore; until in their eyes who beheld He seemed to clothe Himself with light, which is ever the proper

<sup>1</sup> See note C at the end of the chapter.



and peculiar garment of Deity (Psa. civ. 2 ; 1 Tim. vi. 16), as with a garment."—ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

2. "*He wist not*" (ix. 6) : he knew not (cf. Exod. xvi. 15. *Wist* is the past tense of *to wit* or *wite* (cf. Gen. xxiv. 21 ; Exod. ii. 4 ; 2 Cor. viii. 1). For the substantive, see Psa. cvii. 27.

### B. On the Healing of the Demoniac Boy.

1. *Dumb* (ix. 17) : so as not to be able to pronounce words (cf. Luke ix. 39).

"*Tare him*" (ix. 20) : the mere presence of the Lord brought on a convulsion.

"*If thou canst*" (ix. 23) : it was not a question of the Lord's power, but of the man's belief.

### C. On St. Mark ix. 49.

As it stands in the A.V., the meaning of this difficult verse appears to be this : Salt is used as a preservative from corruption and putrefaction. Hence in the law, all offerings were to be offered with salt (Lev. ii. 13), as an emblem of incorruption. As all sacrifices were thus salted, so must every disciple of the Lord be salted with the fire of self-sacrifice and the discipline of suffering. The R.V. omits the latter clause of this verse.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### The Ministry in Peræa.

THE PHARISEES' QUESTION—JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN—THE RICH YOUNG RULER—CHRIST'S THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS SUFFERINGS—THE REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN—JERICHO—HEALING OF BARTIMÆUS.

**THE Ministry in Peræa** (x. 1-45). In each of the three earlier Gospels there is a great gap or break dividing the narrative into two parts, the first recording the Galilean ministry, and the second the events of the last six months of our Lord's sojourn on earth, ending with the solemn scenes of Passion Week and the Crucifixion.

In St. Matthew's Gospel this break is found at xix. 1, in St. Mark x. 1, and in St. Luke ix. 51. The ninth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel leaves Jesus at Capernaum, but at the opening of the tenth chapter we find Him on the eastern side of the Jordan, on the borders of Judæa.

Now, to fill up the gap, supposing we were reading the Gospels for a complete account of our Lord's career, we must refer to the accounts of St. John and St. Luke.<sup>1</sup>

From these we learn that, leaving His disciples,

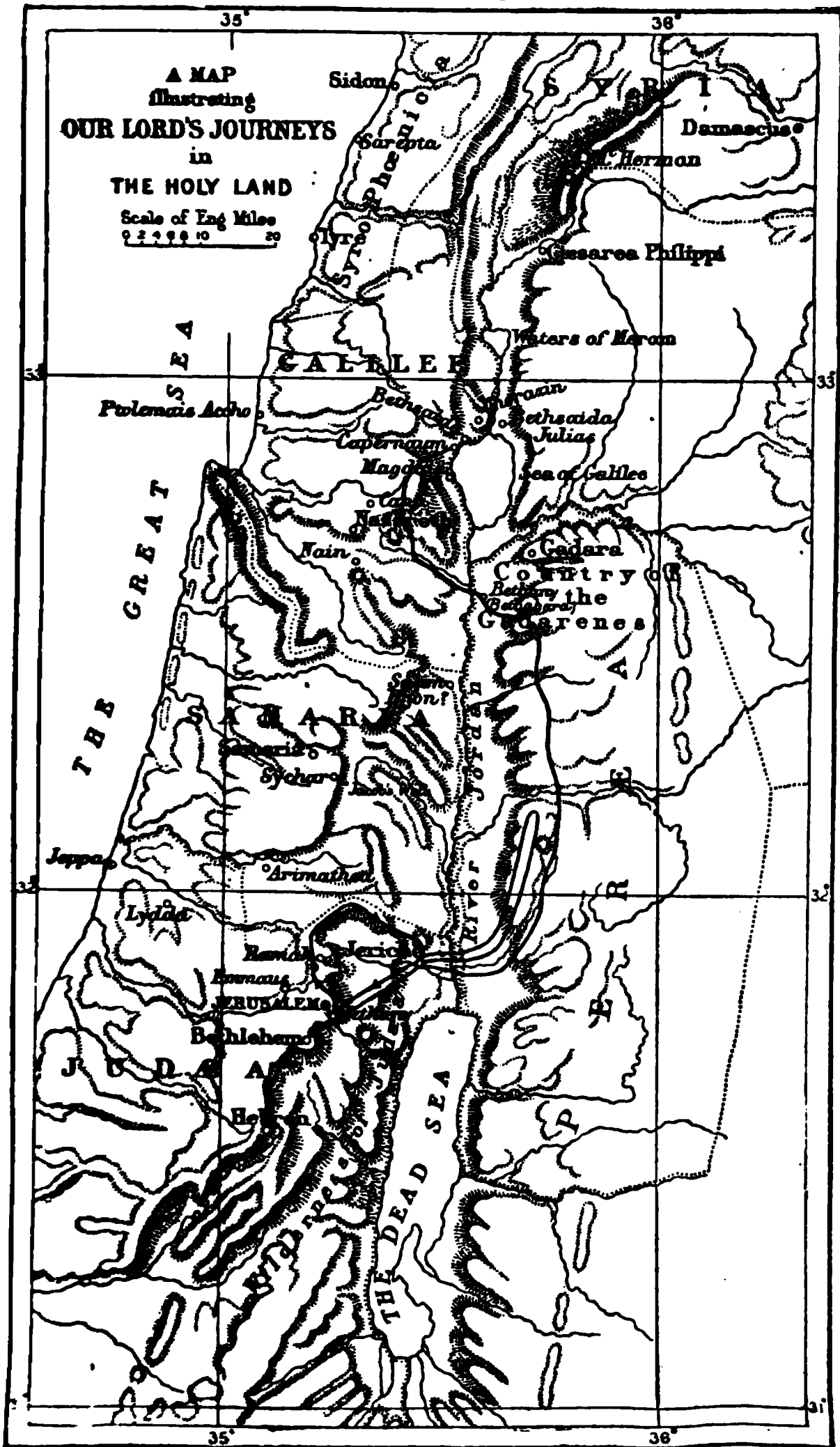
<sup>1</sup> John vii.-xi. ; Luke ix. 51-xviii. 34.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Journey

## A MAP Illustrating OUR LORD'S JOURNEYS in THE HOLY LAND

Scale of Eng Miles  
0 2 4 6 8 10 20





probably at Capernaum, our Lord went up, "not openly, but as it were in secret," to the Feast of the Tabernacles that was to be held in Jerusalem in October; after which it seems likely that He returned for a short time to Galilee. From thence, taking with Him His twelve Apostles, He set out upon His great public and solemn journey as the Messiah, sending out messengers to prepare His way. Rebuffed in a Samaritan village,<sup>1</sup> He crossed the Jordan, and made His way to Jerusalem through Peræa. Then followed the brief sojourn in Jerusalem, and the teaching in the Temple, of which an account is given in the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of St. John. After the Feast of Dedication in December, our Lord left Jerusalem, with His disciples, for the Jordan, and continued His ministry there, awaiting the great Feast of the Passover in the spring of the year. At that feast, he, the true Paschal Lamb, was to be offered up.

We are now prepared to follow St. Mark's narrative of our Lord's ministry in Peræa,<sup>2</sup> or, as the Evangelist tells us, "on the borders of Judæa," by the farther side of Jordan.

**The Question about Divorce** (x. 2-12). The hostile Pharisees still tracked our Lord's footsteps, and questioned Him about divorce—whether it was lawful or not for a man to put away his wife, and to marry another? It was a crafty question, (1) because the Jews themselves were divided into two schools or parties about it, so that whatever our Lord said would offend one party or the other; and (2) Jesus was now in the dominions of Herod Antipas, the murderer of

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 52, 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Peræa*, a Greek word meaning "the opposite country," or "the country beyond." In the time of our Lord it was a name given to that part of Palestine which lay beyond, or eastward of, the Jordan.



John the Baptist, who had put away his lawful wife, and married Herodias. It might be expected that the vengeance of Herodias, which had fallen so swiftly and fatally on the great Forerunner, would not spare that Mightier One, of whom John had testified, if He, too, should rebuke such marriages, and forbid divorce, except for the one cause of unfaithfulness. Jesus first asked these men learned in the Law what Moses commanded. The law of Moses did not forbid divorce, so the answer of the Pharisees was ready:—"Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." Our Lord explained to them that Moses had permitted this, because of the hardness of their hearts; and He went back to the first institution of marriage,<sup>1</sup> declaring plainly the true view of marriage, and that a man and woman once united by God as husband and wife ought not to be separated by the hand of man. It is sad to think how far we still are from realizing this holier state of society.

**The Blessing of Little Children** (x. 13-16). The next scene is far different. Instead of hypocritical Pharisees with their subtle questions, we see little children led to the feet of Jesus. When the disciples desired to keep them away, our Lord "was much displeased," and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Nor is this all, for St. Mark has added yet another beauty to this marvellous picture of our Lord's tenderness by one of those touches which often give such life and reality to his descriptions. St. Matthew and St. Luke have both put the same event on record; but it is only St. Mark who tells us that the compassionate Saviour "*took up* the little ones *in His arms*, and put

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii. 24.



His hands upon them, and blessed them." This should teach us that infants, though too young to understand, may yet receive a spiritual blessing, and that "all the gifts of God do not enter into the soul by the door of the understanding." It may also encourage us "earnestly to believe that our Lord favourably receives the infants brought to Him in Baptism, and embraces them with the arms of His mercy."

**The Rich Young Ruler** (x. 17-31). "And when He was gone forth into the way there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

It was on Thursday, the 6th Nisan, that, followed by the Twelve, and a great number of Galilean disciples, our Lord began His last sad journey to Jerusalem. From St. John we learn that they started from Ephraim, a place fourteen miles north-east of the holy city, where Jesus had retired after the raising of Lazarus, when the Council sought to kill him.<sup>1</sup>

This story of the rich young ruler is recorded by St. Matthew; but we learn from St. Mark some additional particulars—(1) that the young man "came running," in eager haste, and, unlike the hypocritical Pharisees, in undoubted sincerity; (2) that he "kneeled," showing all respect; (3) that "Jesus beholding him loved him;" (4) that He said to him, "Take up the cross;"<sup>2</sup> (5) that the ruler was "sad"—filled with gloomy dejection; and lastly, we learn from St. Mark that our Lord spoke of those who "trust in riches," when He said, "How hardly<sup>3</sup> shall

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 54.

<sup>2</sup> These words are omitted by R.V.

<sup>3</sup> "The Greek word rendered *hardly* means that it will cost him much effort and self-denial."



they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !” and “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Nevertheless it has been well said “that the mere possession of riches ever brings with it the danger and temptation of loving and trusting in them ; so that ‘they that *have* riches’ and they ‘that *trust* in riches’ may be more nearly one than we sometimes think.” In what way, however, are we to understand Christ’s promise, that those who forsake all for Him “shall receive *in this life* an hundredfold ?” It means, doubtless, that they will have far more true happiness than those who choose their portion in this life.<sup>1</sup>

**Christ’s Third Announcement of His Sufferings** (x. 32-34). “And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them : and they were amazed ; and as they followed, they were afraid.” These are St. Mark’s striking words. Jesus “going before”—leading the way with dauntless firm-set purpose—the disciples following in awe, amazement, and perplexity ! Taking the Twelve aside from the multitude of His Galilean followers, our Lord, for the third time, prepared them for those terrible days that were to close the coming week, and foretold once again all that would befall Him—how that He should be betrayed to the chief priests, who would deliver Him to the Gentiles (*i.e.* the Romans), and that they should mock Him, scourge Him, spit upon Him, and kill Him, and how that on the third day He should rise again.

**Request of James and John** (x. 35-45). How different were the thoughts possessing the minds of

<sup>1</sup> We may compare Matt. v. 5 ; x. 39 ; 1 Cor. iii. 21 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8.



the Master and His disciples. He, intent upon the now near accomplishment of His great work of redemption, "by His perfect obedience expiating our disobedience ;" they, thinking only of an earthly kingdom, and their places therein.<sup>1</sup>

**Arrival at Jericho** (x. 46). Their road led them through Jericho, a city famous in the early history of the chosen people. It was the first place in the promised land taken by the Israelites, or rather miraculously given into their hands by God. In old times it was called the "City of Palm-trees," and had recently been magnificently rebuilt by Herod the Great. Both in climate and position it was a favoured city. Though close to the bare and bleak "hill-country," it stood, well sheltered, far down in the fertile Jordan valley, looking across that river upon the blue mountains of Moab. Its trade was large in dates, spices, and fruits, the products of its sunny gardens and orchards. More than one great thoroughfare to Jerusalem passed through the town and district ; and now, at the time of which we write, caravans of Passover pilgrims were hastening along them on their way to the holy city.

**Healing of Bartimæus** (x. 46-52). St. Mark gives us no account of our Lord's stay in Jericho, but tells us that "as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the wayside begging."<sup>2</sup> There, it may be, he had sat for many a weary hour. But on this day in particular he heard something

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The syllable "Bar" means "The son of;" so that "Bartimæus" means "the son of Timæus." Similarly, Bar-tholomew, Bar-jona, Barnabas, etc. See note B at the end of the chapter.



unusual. The sound of many footsteps and the hum of many voices excited his curiosity to know the cause ; and when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he began to cry out and say, " Jesus, Thou Son of David,<sup>1</sup> have mercy on me." When bidden by the bystanders to " hold his peace," " he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And Jesus heard the cry, stood still, and bade them call the blind man. Joyfully, in obedience to the summons, he, " casting away his garment, sprang up,<sup>2</sup> and came to Jesus."

The earnest longing of the blind man was soon satisfied. He heard words he surely never forgot, " Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." The blackness of darkness, in which he had so long dwelt passed away, and Bartimæus beheld the blessed light of day, and the beautiful scene around him ;—the blue southern sky, the stately palms, the thousand spring flowers in the green meadows and beside the road. More than all, as he looked upon the sacred face and form of Jesus Christ, His merciful Deliverer, he must have felt that the true Light, the Light of the World, had indeed shone into his heart, and given him new and unwonted spiritual hopes and joys.

It is not without significance, too, that our blessed Lord, on the eve of His passion, should have given another such signal proof of His Oneness with the Father, Who, in the beginning had said, " Let there be light, and there was light."

<sup>1</sup> The title " Son of David " applied by Bartimæus to our Lord shows that he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and had heard of His miracles.

<sup>2</sup> So R.V., adopting the more vivid reading of some older MSS.



## NOTES.

## A. On Mark x. 40.

In the A.V. the verse stands thus : " But to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not mine to give : but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared."

In the R.V. the words are : " But to sit on My right hand, or on *My* left hand is not mine to give : but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared."

The words in italics are insertions of the Translators, or Revisers. They would be better omitted. Our Lord means to say that the places asked for are not to be given to any one who asks for them, but that He will give them to those for whom the Father has appointed them.

## B. On the Healing of Bartimæus.

St. Matthew speaks of two blind men. St. Mark and St. Luke of only *one*. The first two Evangelists tell us that the healing took place as Jesus was going out from Jericho, St. Luke that it happened as our Lord was *coming* nigh to the city. How are these accounts to be reconciled? Trench (following Bengel) considers " the right reconciliation of the difficulty " to be " that one cried to Him as He drew near to the city, whom yet He cured not then, but on the morrow at His going out of the city cured him together with the other, to whom in the meanwhile he had joined himself. St. Matthew will then relate by anticipation, as is not uncommon with all historians, the whole of the event where he first introduces it, rather than by cutting it in two halves, and deferring the conclusion, preserve a more painful accuracy, yet lose the effect which the complete history, related at a breath, would possess."



## CHAPTER XX.

### The Holy Week.

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—THE PASSOVER AND THE  
FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.

**THE Journey to Jerusalem** (xi. 1-11). On leaving Jericho our Lord began the last stage of His journey to Jerusalem, and the most toilsome. The whole eighteen miles is one long ascent. Jerusalem lies more than 3000 feet higher than Jericho, and the steepest part of this rugged and dangerous road is immediately below Bethany, a retired mountain-hamlet, two miles east of the Holy City, and hidden from it by the intervening ridge of Olivet. Here, at this quiet village, where our Lord arrived six days before the Passover, we leave Him a while, and take a glance at the sacred capital of Palestine, then preparing for the great Festival so near at hand.

**The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.** It was the most important of the sacred seasons of the Jews, for the round of Temple-festivals was about to begin with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.<sup>1</sup> For more than a month previously preparations were made, in the repair of

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of the chapter.



bridges and roads throughout the land, and the whitening of the sepulchres around Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The month in which the Passover was held was called Abib, or, by the later Jews, Nisan. It was the first month of the sacred year, and answered in time to parts of our March and April.<sup>2</sup> In the warmer climate of Palestine it is the greenest, freshest, and most beautiful season of the year. The cold and the rain are past, and the burning sun of the later months has not yet withered either grass or plant. The barley has been for some time in the ear, and is nearly ripe, while the innumerable flowers of spring are in all their glory.

On the eve of the memorable Passover of our Lord's crucifixion, Jerusalem was, as usual, putting on her holiday attire. Thousands and thousands of pilgrims, from all parts of the land, and from countries far beyond, were pouring into the Holy City. Thousands, unable to obtain house accommodation, were setting up their tents and booths in the gardens and vacant spaces, and over the west side of Olivet without the walls.<sup>3</sup>

And our Lord came to this feast of the Passover, because the time had come for Him to lay down His

<sup>1</sup> Our Lord alludes to this custom, Matt. xxiii. 27. Any one who touched a grave became ceremonially unclean (Numb. xix. 16). To prevent this pollution, especially before the Feast of the Passover, it was usual to whiten all the sepulchres, about a month previously, on 15th of Adar.

<sup>2</sup> See Exod. xii. 2 ; xiii. 4. The name "Abib" only occurs in the Pentateuch. It means "the month of green ears," when the wheat and barley began to ripen. The meaning of "Nisan" is doubtful. It may mean "the flower month." It does not appear to have been used until after the Captivity (Neh. ii. 1 ; Esther, iii. 7).

<sup>3</sup> The inhabitants of Jerusalem opened their houses to their brethren on these occasions. But even so, large numbers were obliged to camp on the hills around the city.



life for the sins of the world, and it was meet that He, of Whom the paschal lamb was a type, and Who was Himself the true Paschal Lamb, should be slain at the paschal season.

**The Typical Character of the Feast.** The better to understand this and the Gospel history, let us consider briefly the Jewish religion and the meaning of all this crowding to Jerusalem.

We have already mentioned how God taught His people by shadows, types, or symbols, which were images, pictures, or representations of things not seen. In this way the thoughtful amongst them learnt much about God and His purposes.

There was first the grand and stately Temple, unlike any other building in the world, "a mass of snowy marble and of gold," towering up high above its rocky foundation. Every part of the Temple proper had its meaning, and was a type of things unseen. There was the Holy Place, and the Most Holy, in which at one time were kept the ark, and the cherubim, and the tables of the covenant, and on which the cloud of the Divine glory, or Shechinah, once rested, assuring God's people that He was with them, and that He was their King.<sup>1</sup> And as the Temple was unlike any other building in the world, so it stood alone in its uses. Here, and here only, was God's altar ; here only might sacrifices be offered ; and here only might be seen in type and figure all the mysteries of Redemption. No imitation of all this, either of the

<sup>1</sup> The Shechinah, or bright cloud, the visible symbol of God's glory and presence (Exod. xiii. 21, 22 ; xiv. 20), rested on the Tabernacle (Exod. xl. 34, 35), and filled Solomon's Temple (1 Kings viii. 10, 11 ; 2 Chron. v. 13, 14). There is no reason to suppose that it ever abode in the Second Temple, built after the Captivity.



Temple or its services, was permitted in the Holy Land.<sup>1</sup> Here alone the great festivals might be celebrated ; and when, in addition to this, we remember that every male Israelite was commanded to attend these feasts and to present himself before the Lord in the Holy City three times a year, we see at once the reason why at the Passover season Jerusalem was full to overflowing. No doubt, to many the Temple service was merely an outside show, and a thing of vague meaning. But the more spiritually minded worshippers would be taught the holiness of God, the necessity of atonement, of a mediator, and of personal purity ; and their longings for the Promised One Who should fulfil all types and prophecies, and make all plain, would be continually increased.

The three great "Pilgrimage Feasts" of Israel, as they are called in the Talmud,—the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles—had both a lower and a higher meaning. The former had reference to the season of the year and to the fruits of the land ; the latter gave to these feasts, especially perhaps the Passover, a typical bearing. It is only needful here to speak of the Passover, and of that sufficiently to understand its typical bearing upon the solemn event of the Holy Week.

It was instituted on that night, "much to be remembered," when Israel's cruel slavery in Egypt came to an end, and the chosen people were brought out by the Almighty arm, to march, as a nation, to the promised land. Of this great historical fact, the Passover<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Guizim, about the close of the fifth century, B.C.

<sup>2</sup> "The name "Passover" (Hebrew Phasech, Greek Pascha) refers to its origin,—the Destroying Angel "passing over" the houses of the Israelites, on the door posts of which the blood of the lamb was sprinkled.



was the anniversary ; but this was not all, for it was also a sacrificial rite.<sup>1</sup> To the typical significance of that rite we now for a moment direct our attention.

What were the circumstances under which the Passover was instituted? Briefly these : Joseph, who in fulfilment of God's promises became so great a man in Egypt, had long slept with his fathers, and a king reigned who knew him not, nor remembered his benefits. Becoming alarmed at the constantly increasing numbers of the Israelites, Pharaoh sought to reduce them by persecution, and by subjecting them to a cruel bondage. But the more he afflicted them the more they multiplied. He issued therefore a decree that every male infant born of Israelitish parents should be cast into the river Nile. At last God heard the cry of His people, and sent Moses His servant for their deliverance. When the Egyptian king refused the demand of Moses to let the Israelites go, plague followed plague, until at last God sent His angel to slay the first-born in every home throughout the land.

On that solemn and memorable night, the Israelites were placed by God under His own special protection. In every family, a lamb, a male of the first year, without spot or blemish, was chosen, and solemnly slain. The blood was caught in a bason, and sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the lintel and jambs of the house door. No bone of this "paschal" lamb was broken : it was roasted whole, and eaten by the members of the family, in haste, all ready as for a journey, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. None were to go outside the house all the night.

While the feast was going on in the silence of the night, the angel of the Lord passed through the land

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xii. 27 ; xxxiv. 25.



of Egypt, and smote the first-born of every household, except of those on whose door-posts was sprinkled the blood of the lamb. These houses he passed over.

Now all this was typical of something to come in the future. It had a hidden meaning, and it was this : The paschal lamb, chosen, separated, spotless, was the type of Him Who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners—the Lamb of God slain for the sin of the world."<sup>1</sup> And as the blood of the Paschal Lamb sprinkled on the door-posts turned aside the destroying angel, the minister of God's wrath, so the blood of Christ, sprinkled on the heart and conscience, cleanses from all sin and averts the anger of God. But not only was the blood of the lamb sprinkled. Its flesh, roast with fire, was eaten by the household ; and so not only must the blood of Christ be sprinkled on the heart and conscience, but we are to feed upon him : —"Verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. . . . My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."<sup>2</sup>

Further, the flesh of the lamb being roast with fire, typified the suffering of Christ—the bitter herbs, repentance—the unleavened bread, sincerity and truth.<sup>3</sup> Leaven was a type of deceit and guile, and so putting it away signified the forsaking all malice and wickedness. Lastly, as the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt was a type of the spiritual bondage of men's souls to sin, so the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt was a figure of the redemption of the Church and her members from the power of Satan unto God.

<sup>1</sup> John i. 29, 36 ; 1 Cor. v. 7 ; 1 Pet. i. 19 ; Rev. xiii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 53-55.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v. 8.



Amongst the Jews in their own land the preparations for the Passover began at the sunset of the 13th Nisan,<sup>1</sup> which would, according to the Jewish mode of computing time, be the commencement of the 14th Nisan, the Jewish day being reckoned from evening to evening.

All leaven was then strictly put away, and in Judæa no work might be done after mid-day of the 14th Nisan, when the Passover was reckoned to begin.<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon of that day, after the sun had begun to decline, the heads of the households hastened to the Temple with their lambs, which they sacrificed there.<sup>3</sup> The priests poured the blood at the base of the altar, and a most solemn hymn of praise—the so-called “Hallel”—was sung the while.<sup>4</sup> The service over, each bringer of a lamb returned to his home, bearing upon his shoulders the lamb whose blood he had offered and which was now to be served up, roasted and entire, at the paschal supper.

We have seen that the Lord Jesus was the true Paschal Lamb, and all those types and shadows we have been considering were fulfilled in Him—the “Lamb without blemish and without spot ; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the evening of the 13th to that of the 14th of Nisan was called “The Preparation of the Passover” (John xix. 14).

<sup>2</sup> In Galilee the prohibition to work extended to the whole day. Work in hand might be finished : no new work undertaken.

<sup>3</sup> The expression “Between the two evenings” (Exod. xii. 6, margin ; Numb. ix. 3, 5, margin) is of doubtful meaning. Some take it to mean the time between sunset and darkness ; others, with more likelihood, the time between the declining of the sun and sunset, or from about three to six o'clock. Cf. Matt. xiv. 15, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Psal. cxlii. - cxlviii.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20.



## NOTE.

**On the Distinction between the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

These were properly distinct (Lev. xxiii. 5, 6; Numb. xxviii. 16, 17; 2 Chron. xxx. 15-21; Ezra vi. 19-22; Mark xiv. 1), and were celebrated on different days; the Passover on the 14th Nisan, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th, lasting seven days (Exod. xii. 15). "But from their close connection they are generally treated as one, both in the Old and in the New Testament (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 1); and Josephus on one occasion even describes them as "a feast of eight days" (*Antiq.* ii. 15, 1; but comp. iii. 10, 5; ix. 13, 3)."—DR. EDERSHEIM'S *Temple and its Services at the Time of our Lord*.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### The Holy Week

*(Continued).*

JERUSALEM in the time of our Lord was in all its glory. It might well be described as “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth ;” and the Jew who loved the sacred city with a passionate devotion, which, in these days, we can hardly understand, might well exclaim with enthusiasm, “Walk about Zion, and go round about her ; tell the towers thereof ; mark ye well her bulwarks ; consider her palaces !”<sup>1</sup> It *was* a city of marble palaces, wainscotted, internally, with cedar, and it would bear comparison with any capital in the world, not excepting even imperial Rome. Herod the Great had paved its streets with marble, and adorned it with many a stately edifice ; while on its crowning structure—the Temple—he had lavished through six-and-forty years every embellishment that the architect could devise and wealth supply.<sup>2</sup>

From whatever quarter Jerusalem was approached, its appearance was grand and imposing ; but from the east it was peculiarly striking. Instead of coming gradually into view, it burst suddenly upon the sight as the road wound round the shoulder of Olivet. The

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xlviii. 2, 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 20. See note A at the end of the chapter.



spectator, taken by surprise, was fain to stand still, lost in wondering admiration, as his eye took in every tower and bulwark of the royal city, the great walls, with their hundred towers,<sup>1</sup> the magnificent palace of Herod, the palace of the high priest, the Xystus, or place of popular meeting, and more than all, and far above all, its glorious and sacred Temple.

**Christ's Entry into Jerusalem: Sunday,** the 9th of Nisan (xi. 1-11). Such was the scene that met the Saviour's eye as on that memorable Sunday in Holy Week, with His disciples and the mingled company of followers from Bethany, and sight-seers from Jerusalem, He paused on the side of Olivet, and gazed with sad look of loving tenderness upon His own royal city, that was about to draw down upon itself such terrible condemnation—now so fair, but soon to become a desolation.

St. John tells us that our Lord had rested during the sabbath at Bethany,<sup>2</sup> but of this the other Evangelists make no mention. St. Mark's account of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem corresponds almost exactly with St. Matthew's—Jesus meekly riding upon the ass's colt—the cheering multitude singing Hosannas, hailing Him as the Messiah, and carpeting the road with their garments. "Blessed," they said, "is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

"Blessed be the kingdom of our father David." These words of the 118th Psalm St. Mark only has recorded, and they show that those who used them believed that He Whom they acknowledged as Messiah

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> John xii. 1, 12.



was about to restore the kingdom of David. Of His spiritual kingdom, and of that cross and passion, death, burial, and resurrection whereby He was to ascend His throne, they had no idea. It would have been as great a mystery to them as it was to the Apostles. Joyful and enthusiastic as they were, on this Sunday morning, the multitude would have rejected utterly the thought of a suffering Messiah.

Arrived in the city, Jesus entered the Temple, "looked round about" upon the profaners of His Father's house, and then at eventide returned to Bethany with the Twelve, lodging, probably, with His friends, Lazarus and Mary and Martha.<sup>1</sup>

**Monday**, the 10th of Nisan: **The withering of the fig-tree** (xi. 12-14, 20-26). Very early, probably before the morning meal, our Lord and His disciples were again on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus "was hungry," and "seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon." Finding no fruit, He "answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee, hereafter for ever." The words were heard by the disciples, and on the next morning, "as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up by the roots." This last expressive phrase is peculiar to St. Mark, St. Matthew only noting that "presently the fig-tree withered away."<sup>2</sup>

Our Lord's numberless miracles were miracles of mercy; and this, His single miracle of judgment, was on a tree.

It may, perhaps, seem strange to us that a tree should be treated by the Lord as if it were an accountable being, and as if answerable for its unfruitfulness?

<sup>1</sup> The Synoptic Evangelists omit all mention of this family, except the one anecdote in St. Luke (x. 38-42).

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxi. 17-22.



Besides, why should our Lord have gone up to the tree as if expecting fruit, when He must have known that the time of figs was not yet? We have the answer to these questions in the fact that our Lord was acting a parable. He "intended to show how it would fare with a man or with a nation when God came looking from it for the fruits of righteousness, and found nothing but the abundant leaves of a boastful yet empty profession."<sup>1</sup>

It is a property of the fig-tree, in hot climates, to bear fruit generally before the leaves appear. But here was a fig-tree standing out from its fellows, putting forth leaves abundantly, giving pledge and promise that fruit should be found upon it, and yet utterly barren. In this way it symbolized or represented the Jewish people. The Gentiles had no fruits of righteousness, but they boasted of none; the Jews were equally without any, but they claimed to have them. The Pharisees were not only, as we have seen, hypocrites; they were also self-deceivers. Whilst destitute of real, spiritual religion, they thought themselves the patterns of excellence, and in their self-righteousness despised others—even the Holy One. For this reason our Lord said that the publicans and harlots were nearer the kingdom of God than these proud boasters. This also was the sin, more or less, of the whole nation. Arraying themselves in the leaves of profession, they were without fruit acceptable to God.

**The cleansing of the Temple** (xi. 15-19). On reaching Jerusalem, our Lord went to the Temple, and for the second time during His ministry cleansed it of the traders.<sup>2</sup> These people carried on their business

<sup>1</sup> TRENCH *On the Miracles*.

<sup>2</sup> St. John alone mentions the first cleansing (John ii. 13-17).



in the Court of the Gentiles, the outermost of the three Temple Courts, and not regarded by the Jews as sacred. Our Lord's act therefore teaches us that there is a sacredness attaching even to material things, when once they have been dedicated to God, and to holy purposes. It was a lesson also in honesty and uprightness of dealing. For these traders had often taken advantage of the necessities of their brethren to cheat and overcharge them. But perhaps the cleansing of this court of the Gentiles was more than all significant of the now imminent call of the Gentiles to eternal life. Our Lord was about to offer Himself up a sacrifice and a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Unto Him was the gathering of the nations to be. All men were to be drawn unto Him. This truth, enunciated long before in prophetic utterance by Jacob and the prophets, was obscured by the profanation of this outmost court. Isaiah's words were in danger of being forgotten. The Temple was to be a "House of Prayer for all the nations."<sup>1</sup>

**Tuesday, the 11th of Nisan. The Question about Authority** (xi. 27-33). Irritated, doubtless, by the tacit condemnation of themselves implied in the cleansing of the temple, a deputation of chief priests, scribes, and elders, representing the Sanhedrin,<sup>2</sup> or great council of the nation, went to our Lord, and demanded

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark alone gives the quotation from Isaiah (lvi. 7) in full. We may trace here perhaps the hand of St. Peter, the Apostle to Cornelius. The margin of A.V. and the R.V. are better here than the text of A.V.

<sup>2</sup> The origin of the Sanhedrin (or Council) is uncertain. Some would trace it up to the time of Moses (Numb. xi. 16). Its number of members, seventy, at any rate followed the rule there laid down. It most probably assumed its permanent form in the times of the Maccabees. The High Priest was generally, though not always, the President. It met as a rule in a hall of the Temple, called "Gazzith," but sometimes, as it would seem, in the high priest's house.



an explanation of His conduct. The only answer which He vouchsafed was another question about John the Baptist. Professing themselves unable to answer His question, our Lord refused to answer theirs. He then appears, whilst they were still within hearing, to have assumed, as we might say, the offensive, and to have warned them, under the veil of easily-understood parables, of the dangers they were incurring by rejecting His teaching.

**Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen** (xii. 1-21). Of these parables, St. Mark has recorded only one. It was a picture of the spiritual history of the Jewish nation. Isaiah had already made them familiar with the image of the vineyard. "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts," he had said, "is the house of Israel."<sup>1</sup> God had planted their nation in Canaan, and had entered into covenant with them. Again and again, however, they had rejected God's message by the hands of His servants, and were about to kill the last of them all, and the best, His "well-beloved" Son.<sup>2</sup> The chief priests and their friends understood the meaning of the parable, and were exasperated. But as yet, they could only retire in anger, for wishing "to lay hold on Him," they dared not, for "they feared the people."

**The Tribute to Cæsar** (xii. 13-17). Having failed in their first attack, His enemies tried another plan. They sent some Pharisees and Herodians to "catch Him in talk." Their question was cleverly put. It placed our Lord, to all appearance, between the horns of a dilemma. We owe a duty to all—to God and to man. The clear enunciation of this truth silenced the questioners.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. v. 7. Cf. Jer. xlv. 4; Neh. ix. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See note at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> See further, p. 64.



**The Question about the Resurrection** (xii. 18-27). The other section of the council now tried to entrap our Lord. Their question dealt with the state of man after death. They denied "the possibility of life in a disembodied state." They hoped, therefore, by their question, to reduce belief in such a life to an absurdity. In His reply, our blessed Lord implied, in what He said of the resurrection state, the revelation, afterwards given to St. Paul, of a change from the natural to the spiritual, from the mortal to the immortal. And He proved that those who have died, and passed within the veil, are still living, for God can still say of them, *I am their God*.

**The Question about the Commandments** (xii. 28-34). One of the bystanders, a Scribe, seeing the Sadducees silenced, addressed another question to Jesus Christ, "Which is the first commandment of all?" The man had doubtless been educated according to the usual routine of his class, and had waded through many a lengthy discussion as to the relative importance of various commandments. The question represented real difficulties which had passed through his mind. Here was an opportunity for a solution. He determined to obtain one if he could. And he did. The Lord's answer was clear, plain, and decisive. The whole law, Jesus said, was summed up in two commandments; the principle underlying each was *love*, and the effect must be *obedience*. Therefore, as St. James shows, "he who offends in one point is guilty of all."

**The Question, "Christ—Whose Son is He?"** (xii. 35-37). Our Lord now asked a question in His turn. The enemies could not answer it. Or if they could have done so, the answer would have involved, as perhaps they saw, an admission of His



claims. They were therefore silent. We may note that our Lord, in His question, admits the claim which David had made to being inspired ;<sup>1</sup> nay, we might say our Lord claims inspiration for David.

**The Widow's Mite** (xii. 38-44). Jesus, receiving no answer to His question, proceeded to caution the people against the teaching and practice of the Scribes. Whilst probably He was doing this, His attention was attracted to a poor widow who was adding her little offering to the Temple and its services to those of many richer and wealthier folk. The Lord read her heart, knew her whole life, and took occasion to insist upon the lesson, so often needed, that the Lord looks upon the motive, and loves a cheerful giver.

**The Prophecy upon the Mount of Olives** (xiii. 1-37). Our Lord was leaving the Temple for the night when His attention was drawn to the superb buildings around, the delight and pride of the Jews. His reply must have surprised His hearers. The time was coming when those buildings should be destroyed utterly. Having crossed the valley, our Lord rested for a while on His way to Bethany on the mount of Olives. There four of His Apostles asked Him for further instruction. This He gave them. The destruction of Jerusalem should be preceded by signs which they could not mistake. But to the still greater question,<sup>2</sup> When would He come again, and the world end, there was no actual answer. But He warned them to be ever on the watch, for the coming would be sudden, and there was danger of their sleeping. With these solemn words, that eventful Tuesday closed.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The disciples asked two questions : (1) When would the Temple be destroyed ? (2) When would He come again ? St. Mark records only the first, but he gives our Lord's reply to the second (xiii. 32-37).



*NOTES.***A. On the Temple.**

This wonderful building stood within a cloistered court on an elevated plateau of one thousand feet square. Everything connected with it gives us the idea of grandeur. A bridge of vast dimensions connected it with the city. The southern cloister, called the "Royal Porch," was a building of three aisles of larger dimensions than those of many of our cathedrals. On the eastern side was Solomon's Porch, a colonnade of less lofty dimensions. The Temple proper, or Sanctuary, was in the middle of this large court, and surrounded by three cloisters. It was in these lofty cloisters that our Lord used to teach the people, and converse with the Scribes and Pharisees.

It was the Great Court—called the Court of the Gentiles, because it was open to Gentiles as well as Jews, though they were warned by notices not to go beyond, under pain of death—which the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves for sacrifice, and the money-changers, turned into a kind of market, especially on the eve of a festival (xi. 15-17).

**B. On the Towers of Jerusalem.**

Sixty of these towers were in the old city wall; and in the newer walls of Nehemiah, which made a larger circuit to the north, the number of towers was increased to a hundred. As these towers were about fifty yards apart, the circumference of the city in our Lord's time must have been about three miles. Twelve years after the crucifixion, Herod Agrippa built a new wall, enclosing a large tract of land to the north, and increasing the circumference to about five miles.

**C. On Mark xii. 4, 5.**

According to both Scripture and Jewish tradition the prophets were not only "shamefully handled," but in some instances paid the penalty of their faithfulness with their lives. Jeremiah, it is said, was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, and Isaiah sawn asunder by King Manasseh; and that the statement of the parable is strictly true in fact may be seen by a reference to both the Old Testament and the New. See Jer. xx. 1, 2; xxxvii. 15;



1 Kings xviii. 13; xix. 14; xxii. 24-27; 2 Kings vi. 31; xxi. 16;  
2 Chron. xvi. 10; xviii. 25, 26; xxxvi. 15, 16; and also Acts vii. 52;  
1 Thess. ii. 15. "The whole passage," says Archbishop Trench,  
"finds its best commentary in the words of the Epistle to the  
Hebrews, 'and others had trial of cruel mockings,' " etc. (xi.  
37, 38).



## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Holy Week

*(Continued).*

#### THE FULFILMENT OF CHRIST'S PROPHECY ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

**W**E left our Lord, in the last chapter, seated on the Mount of Olives, on His way to Bethany for the night. There were four of the Apostles with Him, Peter, James, John, and Andrew. To their anxious question about the impending fate of Jerusalem and of the time of His own return, Jesus gave, as we have seen, an answer. How keenly must they have listened, as He spoke to them of coming wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences ; of iniquity abounding and love waxing cold ; of the false Christs and the false prophets who should deceive many ; and of the last sad but terrible days of their city and nation.

Our Lord's words were fulfilled, and the fall of the Jewish Church and nation, of which He spoke, has long since passed into history.

The accomplishment, however, did not come at once. For a few short years the condition of the Jews was much improved, and they even recovered some portion of their independence under Herod Agrippa. But on his death, in A.D. 44, Judæa was ruled once more by



Roman Procurators, whose bad government and cruelties at last drove the people into open rebellion. A war followed (A.D. 66–70). The Jews fought bravely and passionately to regain their liberty, and with some success ; but the mad attempt brought down upon them the whole power of Rome. Yet while contending with foreign foes, this unhappy people, forsaken by God, with the guilt of Christ's blood upon them, fought amongst themselves, and were stricken with every kind of calamity. It was just at Passover-time, in the year 70 A.D., when great numbers of Jews had come from all parts to the festival, that the armies of Rome, under Titus, gathered around Jerusalem. The city was besieged, taken in September of the same year, and destroyed amidst every kind of horror and atrocity. From that time the Jews ceased to exist as a nation, and were scattered over the world. The tribulation of those days was the "coming of the Son of Man" in judgment upon the Jewish nation. Their cry had been "His blood be on us and on our children !" and at last the fearful retribution came upon them. Our Lord had said, "For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of creation," or as St. Matthew has it, "great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world to this day."<sup>1</sup>

Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was not a believer in Jesus Christ, and whose testimony is so far all the more valuable, relates unconsciously and in the most striking manner, the fulfilment of our Lord's prophecy. He says, "All calamities, from the beginning of time, seem to me to shrink to nothing in comparison with those of the Jews ;" and in the sixth book of his Wars of the Jews we may read the history of these calamities.

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii. 19 ; Matt. xxiv. 21.



The most terrible foe that the Jews had to encounter, during the four months' siege of Jerusalem, was not the sword of the Romans, nor the robber-band that ran riot in the city, nor yet their own divisions and fightings, but an enemy more unsparing, more utterly without compassion than any and all of these, and that foe was *famine*. At an early period of the siege, the Roman general, Titus, summoned a council of war to decide whether the city should be stormed, or battered with the engines of war, or blockaded and *starved* into surrender. And when this last mode of warfare was determined upon, the whole Roman army went to work, and, by dint of great labour, built a wall which compassed it round and kept it in on every side ; and then, in the siege and in the straitness, as day by day the provisions grew less and less, the most fearful sufferings were endured, and not only our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives, but the earlier predictions of Moses, became dreadful realities : " The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear ; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." <sup>1</sup> This was actually done—an infant was killed and eaten by its own mother ; the robbers who broke in upon her repast turned away in horror and disgust. Natural affection died out, and the nearest relatives fought with each other for the last morsel of anything

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxviii. 56, 57.



to eat. Nor was there any way of escape, for those who took refuge in the Roman camp were unmercifully *crucified* in sight of their brethren in the city, and at one time five hundred were put to death daily in this manner. Josephus supposes that 1,100,000 perished during the war, and 97,000 were taken away as prisoners ; but this is doubtless one of his frequent exaggerations. Jerusalem was destroyed ; and of its houses and Temple "not one stone was left upon another."<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of our Lord's prophetic discourse, He referred, as we have seen, to His second coming. His words about it have yet to be fulfilled. But "the night is far spent." If watchfulness were needed then, how much more now.

In all the discourses and in all the teaching of Jesus Christ, we cannot fail to note the difference between His language, and that of all the prophets and teachers who went before Him. They spoke in the name of another, "Thus saith the Lord," but Christ in His own name ; "*I* say unto you ;" "*My* words shall not pass away." Truly He is the Lord of the Prophets ! "Never man spake as this man." What mere man could have spoken as Christ spoke.

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#### NOTES.

#### A. On the differences between St. Mark's and St. Matthew's accounts of our Lord's ministry in the Holy Week.

(a) From St. Matthew's narrative of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem we might suppose that the cleansing of the Temple took place on the same day, namely, the Sunday in Holy Week. St. Mark tells us that on the day of entry Jesus "looked round

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.



upon all things " (xi. 11), and that " on the morrow, when they had come to Jerusalem, Jesus went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought " (vv. 12, 15).

(b) The two verses on forgiveness (xi. 25, 26) are found in St. Mark only.

(c) St. Mark (xii.) omits the first and third of the parables spoken by our Lord at this time, namely, that of the " Two Sons," and the " Marriage of the King's Son."

(d) In the question of the Great Commandment, St. Mark gives the quotation from Deut. vi. 4, 5, in full. St. Matthew omits the Scribe's answer, given by St. Mark (xii. 32, 33).

(e) Our Lord's long and terrible rebuke of the Pharisees, so fully recorded by St. Matthew, is very briefly reported by St. Mark for his Gentile readers :—" And he said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the Scribes," etc. (xii. 38-40).

(f) The story of " the widow's mite " (xii. 41-44) is omitted by St. Matthew, but related by St. Luke (xxi. 1-4).

(g) The names of the four disciples who asked Jesus " privately " when His words would be fulfilled, are only given by St. Mark, on the authority, probably, of St. Peter (xiii. 3).

(h) Our Lord's charge to his disciples (xiii. 9-13) is given by St. Matthew at an earlier period, namely, when the Lord sent forth His Apostles (Matt. x. 17-22), and he omits them in the discourse on Mount Olivet. In his tenth chapter, St. Matthew appears to have given, in one view, Christ's commands to His Apostles spoken at different times, or some portions of the charge may well have been repeated.

(i) " *Where it ought not* " (Mark xiii. 14) ; St. Matthew says (xxiv. 15) " in the Holy Place," that is, doubtless, the Temple.

(j) " *In the winter,*" etc. (Mark xiii. 18) ; St. Matthew adds, " neither on the Sabbath day." This St. Mark omits for his Gentile readers, who would not understand the force of it.

(k) " *Neither the Son* " (Mark xiii. 32). St. Matthew omits these important words, but the expression " My Father only " (xxiv. 36), which is St. Matthew's version, means the same thing. In emptying Himself of His glory, and taking on Him the form of a servant (Phil. ii. 7), our Lord placed Himself under limitations of power and knowledge.

(l) " *As a man taking a far journey* " (xiii. 34). It has been observed that this and the following verses seem to be the first portion of the short parable of which the latter part is found in



St. Matthew (xxiv. 45-51), while the last three verses of St. Mark (xiii. 35-37) contain the application of the parable. To read it in its completeness, St. Mark (ver. 34) should first be taken, next St. Matthew (xiii. 45-51), and lastly St. Mark (xiii. 35-37).

**B. On the words "Not one stone left upon another."**

*"Not one stone left upon another."* In A.D. 132 the Jews, under Barcohab, tried to recover Jerusalem and their own independence; but they had not repented of having crucified the Lord of Glory, nor had they acknowledged Him; so their struggle was only a fighting against God, and the punishment He had sent them. They were completely crushed. The ruins that Titus had left were levelled—"laid even with the ground," and the Roman ploughshare passed over the place on which Jerusalem had once stood. Other cities have risen upon its ruins—the city of the Romans, the city of the Arabs, the city of the Crusaders, the city of the Turks—but the Jerusalem of God's Israel has yet to be restored.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### The Holy Week

*(Continued).*

THE COUNCIL MEETING—THE LAST SUPPER—THE  
BETRAYAL—THE TRIALS.

**WEDNESDAY**, the 12th of Nisan. We have no record of the Lord's doings on this day. We may suppose, however, that He spent the greater part of it in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting of the Sanhedrin: Covenant with Judas Iscariot** (xiv. 1-11). St. Mark tells us, in almost the same words as St. Matthew, of the meeting of the Sanhedrin, to consider how they might take Jesus "by craft"; of the offer of Judas; and of the traitor, when the miserable bargain had been made, seeking opportunity to betray his Divine Master.<sup>2</sup>

That a man who had seen so much of our Lord, who had been His "own familiar friend," who, day after day, all through his ministry, had heard the daily teaching of Him Who spake as never man spake, who, an Apostle, had gone forth with his fellow Apostles

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxi. 37. The interview with the Greeks (John xii. 20) took place perhaps on the Wednesday.

<sup>2</sup> The bargain was for thirty pieces of silver, perhaps shekels, worth 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. each. According to the law, thirty shekels were the price of a slave (Exod. xxi. 32).



preaching and doing wonderful works in the name of Christ, that such a man should have acted such a part is marvellous indeed. Nothing could show us so plainly how a man may be called to the greatest outward privileges, to the highest and holiest offices, and yet so use them as only to increase his condemnation.

Let us glance briefly at the character of Judas, and his probable motives for betraying his Lord and Master. Some wicked men throw such a halo of false glory around their worst actions that they are almost grand in their daring and defiance ; and people are tempted to forget their crimes in their splendid though short-lived triumphs. But there was nothing of this in Judas. He was simply mean, avaricious, cowardly, and treacherous ; and though we cannot read all the secret workings of his heart, yet, bearing his character in mind, his motives are not difficult, perhaps, to understand.<sup>1</sup> Judas expected the Messiah to be simply an earthly sovereign—great, powerful, and prosperous—mightier than Solomon, and more magnificent than Herod. Not only his countrymen generally, but, to some extent, his fellow-Apostles, shared his views. When Jesus made it known to the Twelve, plainly and repeatedly, that He would be betrayed, mocked, and crucified, even Peter exclaimed, “Be it far from Thee, Lord !” The revelation of the coming suffering distressed them, and their faith, perhaps, for a moment, was staggered. But their love to their Divine Master kept them true to Him. Judas did not love Him ; and when he found he could gain nothing by following Him, he was probably not only disappointed, but offended and resentful.<sup>2</sup> He proposed therefore to

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> We shall see in the Gospel of St. John, another reason for Judas's



Christ's enemies to betray Him unto them. Thus he hoped to gratify his anger, and indulge his avarice at the same time. So the hateful bargain was concluded, and He abandoned Him from Whom he had nothing now, as he thought, either to hope or to fear.

**Thursday**, the 13th of Nisan : **The Last Supper** (xiv. 12-26). On the Thursday, the Paschal lambs were sacrificed. That very evening Jesus and His disciples must sit down together at the Paschal table ; so "His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare, that Thou mayest eat the Passover? In giving them directions, Jesus refrained from indicating the house precisely. It is not unlikely that our Lord did not wish all His disciples to know exactly where the house was to be found, for the traitor was still amongst them, and if Judas had ascertained beforehand where his Master would eat the Passover, he might have brought the chief priests and their soldiers upon Him before that meal was finished, or the Holy Supper had been instituted.

Later in the day, Jesus and the ten disciples bent their steps towards Jerusalem. How solemn was that walk—the last that our Lord would take in the light of day with His disciples before He suffered! The little party passed unheeded through the crowded streets. Little did the bystanders dream that One of that band of silent, thoughtful men was the true Paschal Lamb—the very Lamb of God so soon to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Nor did they

anger and treachery (John xii. 4-8). St. Mark (xiv. 3-9), as St. Matthew, goes back in his narrative to the previous Sunday, and tells the story of Mary's anointing the Saviour's feet. This seems to be done with the intention of explaining the treachery of Judas. But the full explanation is obtained only by comparing St. John's account with these others.



know that another of the group was the "son of perdition," whose heart was set upon his evil purposes ; or that the others were men whose preaching would change the face of the world, and whose memory would be held sacred to the end of time.

Arrived at the guest-chamber, Jesus sat down with His disciples to the Paschal feast, which He was about to transform into His own Holy Supper.

In this sacred meal, the Paschal lamb was served up entire, every bone being perfect, thus expressing a complete and unbroken sacrifice. The great Anti-type, the perfect and true Lamb of God, of whom the yearly Paschal lamb had ever been the type, was now present, in His own person.

It was "when He had given thanks," after the Paschal meal was finished, that the Lord "took bread and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat ; this is My body." And He gave them the cup, saying, "This is My blood of the New Testament." And they all drank of it. "And when they had sung an hymn,<sup>1</sup> they went out into the Mount of Olives."

**The Agony in the Garden** (xiv. 27-42). Here in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of Olivet, our Lord endured that awful mysterious agony of spirit which none could understand and none could share ; and here He drank of that cup that could not, might not, be taken from Him.

In the midst of all this, our Lord's human soul had a strong desire for human sympathy. His disciples could not indeed drink of His cup, nor be baptized with His baptism of suffering ; but they could watch with Him, and minister to Him. This was all He

<sup>1</sup> Some part of Psa. cxv.-cxviii.



asked them to do, to wait and to watch, while He, their Lord and their Redeemer, trod the winepress alone ! But when He found them asleep, how gentle the reproof ! "Simon," no longer Peter the Rock, "couldst not thou watch one hour ? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. . . . Sleep on now, and take your rest : it is enough, the hour is come ; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

**Good Friday**, the 14th of Nisan. **The Betrayal** (xiv. 43-52). "Sleep on !" The time for watching was past ; the opportunity lost, never to return ! *Judas* at least had obeyed His Lord's last command to him—"That thou doest, do quickly."<sup>1</sup> The chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the servants, the Roman soldiers, the Levite guards, the great multitude, the swords and staves, the tread of many feet, the flaming torches, all proved to the bewildered Apostles that while *they* slumbered *Judas* had made the most of *his* time. All proved too surely that "the Son of Man was betrayed into the hands of sinners." Then all the disciples forsook their Lord, and fled.

**The Trial before the Sanhedrin** (xiv. 53-65). Our Lord was first taken, as we learn from St. John,<sup>2</sup> before Annas, not so much perhaps for examination, as to await the assembling of the council at dawn. The council met in the palace or house of the high priest, Caiaphas. Witnesses were sought for, upon whose evidence His enemies hoped to be able to condemn the Lord to death. But none could be found. Even when the evidence seemed to be accumulating, it was so hopelessly confused and contradictory that even the unscrupulous and unjust judges,

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 13.



before whom our Lord was now arraigned, could make nothing of it.

Angry at the failure of their attempts, Caiaphas at last "stood up in the midst," and himself spoke to Jesus. But the Lord made him no answer, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.<sup>1</sup> Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ *the Son of the Blessed?* Silence *now* would have seemed a giving up of that claim to Sonship, which Jesus Christ had always asserted. So He said, "*I am :* and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death."

At the time of which we write, a Jew might claim to be the Messiah ; but that claim, however false, did not, of necessity, amount to blasphemy ; for it did not necessarily imply that he claimed to be the Son of God. But in applying to Himself the prophecy of Daniel,<sup>2</sup> our Lord claimed for Himself to be Divine, and His claim was so understood by His judges. When, therefore, the high priest rent his tunic in real or pretended horror, and accused his Prisoner of blasphemy, our Lord made no protest, offered no explanation, but by His silence admitted, not the blasphemy, but the claim.

The mockery of our Lord by the servants, as related by St. Mark (xiv. 65), agrees almost word for word with St. Matthew's account of it,<sup>3</sup> but St. Mark puts the scene more clearly and vividly before us by explaining that when they smote Him and told

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel vii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 67, 68.



Him, in ridicule of His claim to be a prophet, to prophesy, *i.e.* to say, who had smitten Him, they "covered His face." Unconsciously they were agents in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting."<sup>1</sup>

**The Denial of St. Peter** (xiv. 66-72). St. Mark relates also the story of St. Peter's fall and repentance in nearly the same words as St. Matthew ; but, with his usual attention to every particular, notices the first as well as the second cock-crowing ; the second only is mentioned by the other Evangelists.

**The Trial before Pilate** (xv. 1-15). The trial over, a consultation was held by the chief priests, with the elders and scribes and the whole council. The result was that "they bound Jesus, and carried Him away and delivered Him to Pilate." The Sanhedrin had already condemned the Lord to death, but their sentence needed the governor's confirmation.<sup>2</sup> They expected Pilate to carry out their sentence without troubling himself as to the grounds upon which they had found their Prisoner to be guilty of death. But this he hesitated to do. St. Matthew and St. Mark vary but little in their accounts of our Lord's examination by Pilate. In both we read that Jesus replied to Pilate's question, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" by the words "Thou sayest it," which means "It is so ;" that the chief priests accused Him of "many things," to which He deigned no answer ; that Pilate marvelled and wished to release Him ; that the people, persuaded by their leaders, chose Barabbas rather, and vehemently demanded that Jesus should be crucified ; that Pilate, dreading "a tumult," and "willing to content the people," gave at last the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 31.



reluctant order that Jesus should be scourged<sup>1</sup> and crucified.

From St. Mark alone we learn that it was the people who first spoke of the release of a prisoner because it was the feast of the Passover: "And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them."

St. Mark, however, omits the three very striking particulars related by St. Matthew, namely:—

1. The warning of Pilate's wife.
2. That Pilate "took water and washed his hands before the multitude."
3. The imprecation of the people: "His blood be on us and on our children."<sup>2</sup>

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### *NOTES.*

#### **A. On the Crime of Judas.**

An eloquent attempt has been made to mitigate the baseness of Judas's conduct by supposing that his motive in betraying Jesus was that he might oblige Him to put forward in self-defence that power of which Judas knew his Divine Master to be possessed. His elevation to a throne and kingdom would thus have been hastened. Suffice it to say that there appears to be nothing in the Gospel narrative to favour such an assumption. Satan had entered into his heart.

#### **B. On the Governorship of Pilate.**

Pilate was the sixth Roman Governor of Judæa, and ruled that country for about ten years, viz. from A.D. 26 to A.D. 36.

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the Romans scourging was usually inflicted with rods, by the "lictors," or official attendants of Roman magistrates of the highest rank. Pilate, being a subordinate governor, had no lictors, and consequently the scourging devolved upon the soldiers.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 19, 24, 25.



He treated the Jews with contempt, and was harsh and unscrupulous in his administration; yet his behaviour to our Lord was respectful, and at last he unwillingly sacrificed Him, fearing an outbreak. He was recalled to Rome in A.D. 36, and afterwards banished by Caligula to Vienne in Gaul, where, according to Eusebius, he committed suicide. "The Roman Procurator or Governor of Judæa was subordinate to the Proprætor or Legatus (Governor) of Syria (an imperial province); but he was invested with the power of a Legatus, which included the infliction of capital punishment."

### C. On the Differences between Mark xiv. and Matt. xxvi.

(a) "*And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him.*" St. Matthew tells us (xxvi. 3) that this secret meeting of the Sanhedrin was held in "the palace of the high priest." Had it taken place as usual in the hall Gazzith, or the Stone Chamber, partly within the Temple, the people who still believed in Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth as the Messiah, might, on ascertaining its object, have interrupted its deliberations or thwarted its decisions.

(b) "*A man bearing a pitcher of water*" (ver. 13); St. Matthew only implies that some sign was mentioned, when he says (xxvi. 18) "to such a man."

(c) "*And he shall show you a large upper room furnished*" (ver. 15). This is omitted by St. Matthew.

(d) "*Which eateth with Me*" (ver. 18). These words are recorded by St. Mark only. Our Lord intended a reference to Psalm xli. 9: "He which did eat of My bread hath lifted up his heel against Me."

(e) St. Mark omits the question of Judas, "Master, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 25); but he implies it, for he mentions that the disciples said "one by one, Is it I?" (ver. 19).

(f) "*He gave it to them*" (ver. 23); St. Matthew adds Christ's command, "Drink ye all of it" (xxvi. 27).

(g) "*Which is shed for many*" (ver. 24); St. Mark omits the words "for the remission of sins" recorded by St. Matthew (xxvi. 28).

(h) "*It is enough*" (ver. 41), meaning "You have slept long enough." This remark of our Lord is not mentioned by St. Matthew.



(i) "*Master! Master!*" [*Rabbi!* in R.V.] (ver. 45). An exclamation of pretended joy at meeting Him. St. Matthew's expression is, "Hail, Master!" (xxvi. 49). St. Mark omits our Lord's answer, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" [Friend, *do* that for which thou art come, R.V.] (Matt. xxvi. 50).

(j) "*There followed Him a certain young man,*" etc. (vv. 50, 51), believed by some to have been St. Mark himself.

(k) "*Spit on Him*" (ver. 65); St. Matthew says, "in the face" (xxvi. 67, 68). This was considered the greatest of insults; even more so than with ourselves.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### The Death and the Resurrection.

**GOOD Friday** (*continued*): **The Crucifixion**  
(xv. 16-41). Through all the fearful hours of Good Friday evil men were working out the purposes of God, and fulfilling the words of Christ. Everything that our Lord had foretold should happen to Him, these unjust judges, mocking Pharisees, deluded people, and callous Roman soldiers, accomplished to the very letter. "Behold!" Christ had said to His disciples, as they went up to Jerusalem, "the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again."<sup>1</sup>

We have already seen how our Lord was delivered (*i.e.* betrayed) to the chief priests and scribes; that they condemned Him to death and delivered Him to the Romans; and that at last the Gentile Pilate gave the order for His crucifixion. The rest of our Lord's prophecy was fulfilled in the exact order in which He said it should come to pass. Almost every incident of His Passion illustrated some one or other of the many

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 33, 34.



prophecies relating to the Messiah contained in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Leading Him from the governor's presence into the courtyard<sup>1</sup> of the building, the soldiers, in whose charge the Lord had been placed, mocking at His claim to sovereignty, clothed Him in one of their own red cloaks,<sup>2</sup> and added other emblems of royalty, a crown and a sceptre ; but the crown was one of thorns, and the sceptre but a reed. Unable as it would seem to bear,<sup>3</sup> from weakness and faintness, His own cross, it was laid upon the shoulders of a passing stranger, an African Jew, who had come up for the feast.<sup>4</sup> Arrived at the place of execution, our Lord was offered the customary stupefying draught,<sup>5</sup> but He refused it. The crucifixion lasted for six hours.<sup>6</sup> Just before the end, our blessed Lord, as if to show us how greatly the Scriptures had consoled Him in the midst of His sufferings, and as recording with His dying breath the fulfilment of prophecy, uttered the opening words of Psalm xxii., the whole of which must have been present to His mind throughout the day. It is the only one of our Lord's sayings from the cross recorded by

<sup>1</sup> "The Prætorium" of St. Mark xv. 16, both in A.V. and R.V. In Matt. xxvii. 27 the word is rendered "common hall" by A.V., and "palace" by R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Purple, or purple streaked with red, was the royal or imperial colour. The dye was scarce and expensive.

<sup>3</sup> Note the "led" of ver. 20, and the "bring" or "bear" of ver. 22.

<sup>4</sup> This "Simon of Cyrene" may have been the same as "Simeon Niger" of Acts xiii. 1. St. Mark alone mentions his sons. They were evidently well-known members of the (Roman?) Church. One of them, Rufus, is mentioned probably in Rom. xvi. 13.

<sup>5</sup> "Wine mingled with myrrh" (St. Mark); "vinegar mingled with gall" (St. Matthew). "The ladies of Jerusalem" (says Dr. Deutsch, Art. "Talmud," *Qr. Rev.* No. 246) "formed a society which provided a beverage of mixed myrrh and vinegar, that, like an opiate, benumbed the man when he was being carried to execution."

<sup>6</sup> From nine a.m. to three p.m.



St. Mark.<sup>1</sup> In common with St. Matthew, St. Mark mentions the rending of the temple veil, the confession of the centurion, and the presence of the ministering women.<sup>2</sup>

**The Burial** (xv. 42-47). To prevent the body of the Lord from being treated as that of a common malefactor,<sup>3</sup> one of His secret disciples, a wealthy and influential member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea, with a new-found boldness, perhaps all the more remarkable in the moment of the triumph of the Lord's enemies, craved the body from Pilate. Having assured himself that death had already taken place, the governor granted the request. Assisted by Nicodemus,<sup>4</sup> Joseph laid the body in a new, and hitherto unused, tomb,<sup>5</sup> and secured the sepulchre by rolling the great stone door along its groove into its place before the mouth of the grave. His proceedings were watched by two of the loving and ministering women.

**Lessons of our Lord's Passion:** *The mystery of God's foreknowledge.* The history of our Lord's Passion, itself a mystery, brings under our notice some of those mysteries which make us feel our own nothingness. One of these mysteries is God's foreknowledge.

God's foreknowledge and man's free agency—God foretelling by His prophets what will happen many hundreds of years before it comes to pass ; men doing exactly what God had declared they would do, and yet

<sup>1</sup> The crucifixion of the thieves gives occasion to St. Mark to make one of his very few quotations from the Old Testament, viz. ver. 28. This verse, however, is omitted by R.V., though noted in the margin.

<sup>2</sup> See further, ch. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Thrown, that is, into the valley of Hinnom, and there burnt.

<sup>4</sup> John xix. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Thus preventing any doubt as to whose body had risen again on Easter Day.



acting under no necessity or compulsion, but of their own free will—this is one of those mysteries that we cannot understand with our present capacities. Yet both doctrines are true, for both are revealed in Scripture. That men are free to choose either good or evil we know also from our own experience.

These doctrines were never more strikingly illustrated than in the fulfilment of the prophecies relating to our Lord Jesus Christ. The treachery of Judas, “the son of perdition,” and many even of the lesser incidents of Christ’s Passion, were all clearly foretold in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, for instance, might well be the words of an eye-witness, so closely do they anticipate the details of the Gospel narrative.

These and other prophecies should be read together with the Gospel narrative of the betrayal, and the events that followed it. To take a few examples :—

“Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me.”<sup>1</sup> “So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver.”<sup>2</sup> “For dogs (the heathen) have compassed Me ; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me : they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones : they look and stare upon Me. They parted My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.”<sup>3</sup> “All they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn : they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him : let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.”<sup>4</sup> “I gave My back to the smiters, and My

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xli. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Psa. xxii. 16-18.

<sup>3</sup> Zech. xi. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Psa. xxii. 7, 8.



cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not My face from shame and spitting."<sup>1</sup> "Reproach hath broken My heart ;<sup>2</sup> and I am full of heaviness ; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat ; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."<sup>3</sup> "He keepeth all His bones ; not one of them is broken."<sup>4</sup> "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death."<sup>5</sup>

*The meaning of Christ's Death. First:* It was a *sacrifice*. We are told that "He was wounded for our transgressions," "He was bruised for our iniquities ;" that He made "His soul an offering for sin ;" that "He died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God ;" "Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world ;" . . . "My flesh which I give for the life of the world ;" . . . "This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins ;" and many other passages might be cited to show that Christ's death was a *sacrifice*.

A sacrifice is a *free-will offering for the expiation* of sin. We find that our Lord so defined His death. It was voluntary : "I am the Good Shepherd : the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."

*Secondly:* It was also a *propitiation*. St. John does but condense into one phrase the whole teaching of Scripture when he writes : "He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Psal. lxxix. 20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Psal. xxxiv. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. liii. 9.



whole world."<sup>1</sup> We cannot explain to ourselves this mystery of propitiation ; but if we reverently believe that in some mysterious way the sin of the world was laid upon Christ, we need not marvel at that *agony of spirit*, of which Gethsemane and Calvary were witnesses, and for which no bodily sufferings could possibly account.

*Thirdly*: The sufferings of Christ were *foreordained*. This is clear, not only from the passages of Scripture already cited, but from their being prefigured in the whole sacrificial system of the law of Moses. Our Lord Himself must have intended to point to the typical character of that system, when He spoke of Moses having foretold His sufferings ; for where else in Moses' writings are we to find them ?

*Fourthly*: It was a *final conflict with the Evil One*. "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," were Christ's words to His disciples on the way to Gethsemane. And it will be remembered that at the close of the conflict in the wilderness, it was stated that the Tempter left Him "for a season,"<sup>2</sup> implying a return.

It will help us to a right understanding of our Lord's passion to bear in mind that it was (1) *a sacrifice*, (2) *a propitiation*, (3) a fulfilment of a *foreordained* purpose, and (4) *a conflict* with the Evil One.

**Easter Even**, 15th Nisan. The day that followed our Lord's Crucifixion was no Sabbath of rest to His disciples, but a sad day of mourning and weeping. Their dear Master was gone, and when would He return ? Most of all must it have been a day of bitterness to St. Peter, as he remembered his recent

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 13.



denial of his suffering Lord. They all had trusted to the very last "that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel ;" but His Crucifixion, although He had forewarned them again and again that so it must be, seems to have crushed out all their hope.

**Easter Day**, 16th Nisan (xvi. 1-8). Just in proportion to the dejection of that Saturday must have been the joy and surprise of the Easter salutation : "Tell His disciples and *Peter* that He goeth before you into Galilee : there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." Such were the angel's words to the women, who were the first to visit the sepulchre, at dawn on the Sunday morning, "when the Sabbath was past."<sup>1</sup>

The mention of Peter by the angel, when reported to the Apostle, must have made a deep impression on his mind. To that impression we probably owe its record here.

Christ's Resurrection was an assurance, that all who are united to Him shall rise in like manner. But it was more than this. It was a proof that God had accepted His sacrifice as a sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

**The Forty Days** (xvi. 9-18). St. Mark's account of the forty days after our Lord's Resurrection is as brief as St. Matthew's ; and neither Evangelist devotes more than about twenty verses to the history of this period. Indeed, St. Mark seems to have ended his Gospel originally at the eighth verse of his last chapter, and to have added the remaining twelve verses as a *postscript*.<sup>2</sup> Including this postscript, St. Mark mentions three appearances of our Lord : to Mary Magdalene, to two of the disciples as they walked into the

<sup>1</sup> See notes B and C at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See note D at the end of the chapter.



country, and to the eleven as they sat at meat. These last He rebuked for not believing the testimony of those who had already seen Him. Our Lord's last charge and commission to His Apostles, as given by St. Mark, is a summary probably of words spoken at various times during the forty days.

**The Ascension** (xvi. 19, 20). St. Mark narrates this in the briefest manner, and brings his short, fervid narrative to an end, by telling us that after the Ascension, the Apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the words with signs following." Such a conclusion suits well the Evangelist whose delight all through has been to dwell upon the miraculous and healing power of the Son of God.

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#### NOTES.

##### A. On "The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ."

"The physical cause of the death of Christ" has been reverently investigated by an eminent Scotch physician, and he came to the conclusion that the immediate cause of death could be traced to a broken heart, the result of the intense mental distress, the mysterious woe that weighed upon and crushed Him when bearing the sins of the world. Other eminent physicians have concurred in this opinion, and, if it be so, the prophecy (Psa. lxxix. 20) was much more literally fulfilled than has been generally supposed.

##### B. On "Who shall roll us away the Stone?"

The Jews were wont to hew out their tombs on the side of a rock, and they were as lasting as the rock itself. The tombs of Jerusalem are rock-hewn caves ; some mere grottoes with one



or two receptacles for bodies, others of great extent. The doors are low and narrow so as to be shut by a single slab. This slab was called "*golal*," that is "a thing rolled," because it was rolled back from the opening in a groove made for it. The stone being heavy and the groove generally inclining downwards, it was a difficult matter, requiring great strength, to roll it back.

"The Jews used no coffins. The body was washed, anointed, wrapped in linen cloths, and laid in the niche prepared for it, which lay endwise in the side of the rock-chamber."—PROFESSOR PORTER, in *Giant Cities of Bashan*.

### **C. On the "Young Man" of Mark xvi. 5.**

This was doubtless the angel having the appearance of a young man, of whom we read in St. Matthew's narrative as sitting upon the stone, but who now was in the sepulchre; "sitting" (as St. Mark says) "on the right side."

### **D. On the last twelve verses of St. Mark's Gospel.**

"At the end of ver. 8, the narrative suddenly breaks off, as though a page had been lost. What follows seems to have been added later, and possibly by another hand. Bishop Lightfoot conjectures that we owe it 'to that knot of early disciples who gathered about St. John in Asia Minor, and must have preserved more than one true tradition of the Lord's life and of the earliest days of the Church?' As it is found in all old MSS. except two, is quoted by Irenæus, and appears in all the early versions, it may be accepted as a part of Canonical Scripture, whether written by St. Mark or not."—ARCHDEACON NORRIS.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS XIII.—XXIV.

### I. Analysis of St. Mark's Gospel.

#### I. Introduction. i. 1-13.

1. Preaching of John the Baptist. i. 1-8.
2. Baptism of Jesus. i. 9-11.
3. Temptation of Jesus. i. 12, 13.

#### II. Ministry in Galilee. i. 14-vii. 23.

##### A. *The Kingdom preached.* i. 14-iii. 13.

1. Near to, and at Capernaum : preaching and healing.  
i. 13-34.
2. *First retirement* (to a solitary place). i. 35.
3. Tour in Galilee : Leper healed. i. 36-45.
4. *Second Retirement* (to desert places). i. 45.
5. At Capernaum again : Conflict with the Rulers. ii. 1-  
iii. 12.

##### Including—

- (a) Paralytic healed : Charge of Blasphemy. ii. 1-12.
- (b) Call of Matthew : Eating with Publicans and  
Sinners. ii. 13-17.
- (c) Fasting of Disciples. ii. 18-22.
- (d) Disciples pluck ears of corn : The Sabbath made  
for Man. ii. 23-28.
- (e) Withered Hand healed : Charge of Breaking the  
Sabbath. iii. 1-6.

##### 6. *Third Retirement* (to the Lake). iii. 7.

##### 7. Great Multitudes follow the Lord. iii. 8-12.

#### B. *The Kingdom set up.* iii. 13-vi. 6.

1. Call of the Twelve Apostles. iii. 13-19



## 2. At Capernaum again : Renewal of the Conflict. iii. 20-35.

Including—

(a) How can Satan cast out Satan? iii. 22-30.

(b) The true kindred. iii. 31-35.

## 3. By the Sea-side : Parables of the Kingdom. iv. 1-34.

Including—

(a) The Sower ; (b) Seed growing secretly ; (c) The Mustard Seed.

## 4. On the Lake : Stilling the Tempest. iv. 35-41.

## 5. In the Gadarene Country : Demoniac healed. v. 1-20.

## 6. At Capernaum again : Miracles.

Including—

(a) The Woman with the issue. v. 25-34.

(b) Jairus's Daughter. v. 21-24 and 35-43.

## 7. At Nazareth : Rejection : Unbelief. vi. 1-5.

## 8. *Fourth retirement* (into villages). vi. 6.

## C. *The Kingdom Organized.* vi. 7-vii. 23.

1. Mission of the Twelve. vi. 7-13, 30.

2. Murder of the Baptist. vi. 13-29.

3. *Fifth Retirement* (to a desert place). vi. 31, 32.

4. Near Bethsaida Julias : The Five Thousand fed. vi. 33-46.

5. On the Lake : Walking on the Water. vi. 47-52.

6. In the Land of Gennesaret : Many healed. vi. 53-56.

7. Conflict renewed : True source of defilement. vii. 1-23.

8. *Sixth Retirement* (to borders of Tyre and Sidon). vii. 24.

## III. **Ministry in Northern Galilee.** vii. 24-ix. 50.

### A. *Beyond the Holy Land.* vii. 24-30.

1. The Syrophenician Woman : Hope for the Gentiles.

### B. *Return through Decapolis.* vii. 31-viii. 27.

1. Gradual healing of the Deaf Mute. vii. 31-37.

2. The Four Thousand fed. viii. 1-9.

3. In Dalmanutha : Pharisees ask a Sign. viii. 10-12.

4. *Seventh Retirement* (across the lake). viii. 13.



5. The Disciples cautioned. viii. 14-21.
6. At Bethsaida Julius again: Gradual cure of Blind Man. viii. 22-26.
7. *Eighth Retirement* (to neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi). viii. 27.
- C. *Amongst the Slopes of Lebanon.* viii. 27-ix. 29.
  1. St. Peter's Great Confession. viii. 27-30.
  2. *First clear Prediction of the Passion.* viii. 31-33.
  3. Conditions of Discipleship. viii. 34-38.
  4. The Transfiguration. ix. 1-13.
  5. The Lunatic Boy healed. ix. 14-29.
- D. *Return into Galilee.* ix. 30-50.
  1. *Second Prediction of the Passion.* ix. 30-32.
  2. At Capernaum again. ix. 33-50.
 Including—
  - (a) Lesson in Humility. ix. 33-37.
  - (b) Lesson in Toleration, Charity, and Self-denial. ix. 38-50.
- IV. **Ministry in Peræa.** x. 1-31.
  1. On Marriage and Divorce. x. 2-12.
  2. Blessing Little Children. x. 13-16.
  3. The Rich Young Ruler. x. 17-27.
  4. The Disciple's Reward. x. 28-31.
- V. **Last Journey to Jerusalem.** x. 32-52 and xiv. 3-10.
  1. *Third Prediction of the Passion.* x. 32-34.
  2. Ambition of James and John. x. 35-45.
  3. Healing of Bartimæus. x. 46-52.
  4. The Anointing at Bethany. xiv. 3-10.
- VI. **The Holy Week.** xi. 1-xv. 47.
  1. *Sunday.* xi. 1-11.
 Including—
    - (a) Entry into Jerusalem. xi. 1-11.
    - (b) *Ninth retirement* (to Bethany). xi. 11.
  2. *Monday.* xi. 12-19.
 Including—
    - (a) Withering of the Fig-tree. xi. 12-14.
    - (b) Second cleansing of the Temple. xi. 15-18.



(c) *Tenth Retirement* (to Bethany). xi. 19.

3. *Tuesday*. xi. 20-xiii. 37.

Including—

(a) Lesson of the withered Fig-tree. xi. 20-26.

(b) Question of the Sanhedrin: By what authority, etc.? xi. 27, 28.

(c) Counter-question of Christ: The baptism of John, etc.? xi. 29-33.

(d) Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. xii. 1-12.

(e) The Pharisees' question: The Tribute Money. xii. 13-17.

(f) The Sadducees' question: The Resurrection. xii. 18-27.

(g) The Scribe's question: The Great Commandment. xii. 28-34.

(h) The Lord's counter-question: Whose Son is Christ? xii. 35-37.

(i) Beware of the Scribes. xii. 38-40.

(j) The Widow's Mite. xii. 41-44.

(k) Discourse on the Mount of Olives. xiii. 1-37.

4. *Wednesday*. xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11.

Including—

(a) Conspiracy against Jesus. xiv. 1, 2.

(b) Compact with the Traitor. xiv. 10, 11.

5. *Thursday*. xiv. 12-52.

Including—

(a) The Last Supper. xiv. 12-26.

(b) Protestations of Peter and the others. xiv. 27-31.

(c) The Agony in the Garden. xiv. 32-42.

(d) The Betrayal. xiv. 43-50.

(e) Incident of the Young Man. xiv. 51, 52.

6. *Friday*. xiv. 53-xv. 47.

Including—

(a) Trial before the Sanhedrin. xiv. 53-65.

(b) Denials of Peter. xiv. 66-72.

(c) Trial before Pilate. xv. 1-20.

(d) The Crucifixion and Death. xv. 21-41.

(e) The Burial. xv. 42-47.



**VII. Christ's Victory.** xvi.**A. *The Resurrection.*** xvi. 1-8.

1. Visit of the Holy Women to the Tomb. xvi. 1-5.
2. Announcement of the Resurrection by the Angel.  
xvi. 6-8.

**B. *Appearances after the Resurrection.*** xvi. 9-18.

1. To Mary Magdalene. xvi. 9-11.
2. To two Disciples. xvi. 12, 13.
3. To the Eleven. xvi. 14-18.

**C. *The Ascension and Session at the Right Hand of God.***  
xvi. 19, 20.**II. Miracles of our Lord.**

Recorded only by St. Mark.

1. The Deaf Mute cured. vii. 31-37.
2. The Blind Man restored to Sight. viii. 22-26.

**III. Parable of our Lord.**

Recorded only by St. Mark.

1. Seed growing secretly. iv. 26-29.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### The Gospel according to St. Luke.

#### ST. LUKE—CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS GOSPEL.

**ST. LUKE.** Like St. Mark, his brother Evangelist St. Luke was not an Apostle, but an "Apostolic man." He was not an eye-witness of what he records in his Gospel, but he tells us that he collected his materials with great care and from the most trustworthy sources.<sup>1</sup>

The records of his own life are but scanty. He is mentioned by name in three places only in the New Testament : (1) Col. iv. 14 ; (2) Philemon 24 ; (3) 2 Tim. iv. 11. From the two former we learn that he was with St. Paul during his imprisonment at Rome ; and from the last, that he was with him in his second imprisonment also.

From the first passage we also learn that St. Luke was a physician, and an especial object of affection with St. Paul.

His Roman name of Lucas <sup>2</sup> implies that he was of Gentile parentage. But, from his evident familiarity with the Jewish customs and the ancient Scriptures, we may infer that he had been brought up as a proselyte to the Jewish religion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> A contraction of *Lucanus*.

<sup>3</sup> We may also perhaps gather the same from his presence with St. Paul at Jerusalem not appearing to have excited the same opposition as did that of Trophimus (Acts xxi. 29).



St. Luke may, perhaps, have been associated with St. Paul and St. Barnabas for a short time during their earlier ministry at Antioch,<sup>1</sup> but we first certainly come across the Evangelist in Acts xvi. 10. The change of pronoun, from "they" to "we" in that passage, shows that St. Luke must have joined St. Paul at Troas on the Apostle's second missionary journey.<sup>2</sup> The Evangelist accompanied his leader into Europe, as far as Philippi. Whilst St. Paul pursued his journey into Greece, St. Luke appears to have stayed at Philippi, which city, perhaps, because of its size, offered him an opportunity not only of preaching the gospel, but of pursuing also his profession.<sup>3</sup> Here probably, with intervals of missionary tours, perhaps as far as Corinth, he made his head-quarters for about seven years.<sup>4</sup> He was, at any rate, at Philippi, when St. Paul passed through the city on his way to Jerusalem, at the close of his third journey. Once more joining the Apostle,<sup>5</sup> St. Luke accompanied him to Jerusalem, and was, without doubt, St. Paul's constant attendant during the two years of his imprisonment at Cæsarea. It was during this time, in all probability, that St. Luke wrote his Gospel. The enforced cessation from missionary work during this period gave him the needful leisure for making all inquiries, and for composing his gospel. The Evangelist accompanied St. Paul to Rome, and

<sup>1</sup> This is suggested by a reading of one manuscript, which inserts "While *we* were assembled together," before "there stood up one of them, etc.," in Acts xi. 28.

<sup>2</sup> We assume that St. Luke was the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. See further, chapter lii.

<sup>3</sup> That St. Luke stayed behind at Philippi, we gather from the change of pronoun in Acts xvii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Some suppose that "the brother" mentioned in 2 Cor. viii. 18 was St. Luke.

<sup>5</sup> See again the change in pronoun in Acts xx. 5.



from that time, except from the notices in the Epistles already alluded to, we lose sight of him. An untrustworthy tradition says that he was a painter, and another that he was martyred in Bithynia ; another, and perhaps more certain tradition, that he died in Greece.

### **Characteristics of St. Luke's Gospel :—**

1. *The universality of the Gospel message.* In St. Matthew's Gospel, our Lord is especially He in whom the Old Testament types and prophecies were fulfilled ; in St. Mark's, He is the Worker of Miracles, declared to be the Son of God with power.

In the third Gospel He is presented to us as *the Son of Man*—the Second, the Perfect, the Ideal Man<sup>1</sup>—the Physician, the Friend, the Redeemer and High Priest *of the whole human race*, seeking not only His own people, but all mankind, the Son not only of David, and of Abraham, but the Son of Adam and the Son of God.

This universality of the Gospel message may be traced all through St. Luke's Gospel as its dominant characteristic. Thus we find that the third Evangelist alone records the mission of the Seventy.<sup>2</sup> In his pages only we find the parable of the good Samaritan, who showed mercy to the stranger in misfortune, while the Jewish priest and Levite passed by on the other side ; and the story of the ten lepers, amongst whom the only grateful one was of the same hated race. St. Luke alone records the words of the angels at the Nativity, "Peace on earth, good will toward men" ; and of the aged Simeon when he saw "the salvation which God had prepared before the face

<sup>1</sup> "The *Second Man* is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

<sup>2</sup> To the Jew, the number seventy typified the outer Gentile world ; the number twelve being the symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel.



of all peoples," and which he declared to be "*a light to lighten the Gentiles*," as well as "the glory of His people Israel."<sup>1</sup>

St. Luke delights to exhibit the Divine Saviour sympathizing with the sorrows of men, comforting them with His gracious words, showing mercy even to the chief of sinners, anxious for the good of His most cruel enemies. In the picture he has drawn for us of our Lord we see, perhaps more clearly than in any other, the utter contrast between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the Pharisees. We behold Him putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting them of low degree ; filling the hungry with good things, while the rich He sends empty away ; caring for the poor, the lowly, the despised and forsaken by the world ; the Son of Man Who came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. He pardons the woman which was a sinner ; He meets the widow of Nain, broken-hearted for the loss of her only son, and addresses to her those tender words, " Weep not " ; He tells the daughters of Jerusalem to weep not for Him but for their own coming troubles. He prays even for those who have nailed Him to the Cross, and, forgetful of His own agonies, He utters those words of Divine compassion, " Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is to St. Luke's Gospel again that we turn for the parables of the rich man and Lazarus, the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the prodigal son, all of which point very clearly to the admission of the Gentiles.

2. While St. Matthew has preserved for us, in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord's teaching respecting the principle and true Spirit of Prayer, St. Luke more especially shows us how Jesus Christ carried out His own teaching, and still further enforced it. St. Luke

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 14, 32.



records no less than six occasions on which our Lord prayed,<sup>1</sup> and whilst with St. Matthew, preserving for us "The Lord's Prayer," he has also given the two parables which press home the need of earnestness in Prayer, the Friend at Midnight, and the Unjust Judge.<sup>2</sup>

3. St. Luke's Gospel is remarkable also as preserving for us four sacred hymns—the GLORIA IN EXCELSIS of the angels, the MAGNIFICAT of the Virgin Mary, the BENEDICTUS of Zacharias, and the NUNC DIMITTIS of the aged Simeon. These have formed part of the worship of the Church from the earliest times. In our own Church, the last three are used in our Morning or Evening Prayer, whilst the first forms the opening of that glorious burst of praise and thanksgiving with which the Service of the Holy Communion so grandly and so fitly closes.<sup>3</sup>

4. Another characteristic of St. Luke's Gospel is the cultured style of the language, evidencing a man of education. The remarks St. Luke frequently makes respecting men's thoughts and feelings reveal his powers of observation, and his interest in the workings of the human mind.<sup>4</sup> His training as a physician<sup>5</sup> may have strengthened naturally fine gifts. We may perhaps recognize the medical man in St. Luke's account of the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, and of our Lord's agony in the garden, when His sweat "was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

<sup>1</sup> These were—1. At His Baptism (iii. 21); 2. After cleansing the leper (v. 16); 3. Before calling the Twelve (vi. 12); 4. At the Transfiguration (ix. 28); 5. On the Cross for His murderers (xxiii. 34); and 6. With His dying breath (xxiii. 46).

<sup>2</sup> Luke xi. 5-13; xviii. 1-8. Cf. xxi. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ii. 14, i. 46-55, i. 68-79, ii. 29-32. The words of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary have also the character of a hymn.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Luke iii. 15, vi. 11, vii. 39, xxiv. 41, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Col. iv. 14.



5. St. Luke wrote his Gospel in Greek, probably, as we have seen, at Cæsarea, during St. Paul's imprisonment there.<sup>1</sup> He makes no reference to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, nor is there anything to show that he had seen them. He does, however, refer, in his important and interesting preface, to other and probably fragmentary narratives, written by those who, "from the beginning, were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word."<sup>2</sup> Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the help, probably, and direction of St. Paul, he appears to have made careful selections from these earlier writings, and to have supplemented them by painstaking personal inquiries amongst those who had companied with the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. In the prominence which St. Luke gives to those parables of our Lord, which bear especially on the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church, in the preservation particularly of the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, and in the great similarity between St. Paul's and St. Luke's accounts of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, we may trace the influence, probably, of the great Apostle.

6. We owe to St. Luke the knowledge of many occurrences or facts of Gospel history which are not to be learned from the writings of the other Evangelists. Amongst the more important of these are the story of the birth of John the Baptist ; the Annunciation ; the visit of the Virgin Mary to Elisabeth ; a fuller account of the birth of our Lord ; the events of His early infancy—including the circumcision, the presentation in the Temple, and the blessing and prophetic words of Simeon ; and, notably, that interesting glimpse of our Lord's youthful days, His visit to Jerusalem and the Temple at the age of twelve years.

<sup>1</sup> About A.D. 57-60.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 1-4.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### Preparation for the Messiah.

THE POLITICAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION  
OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AT THE TIME OF OUR  
LORD'S BIRTH—THE FAITHFUL FEW—ZACHARIAS  
AND THE ANGEL—THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

**A**T the time of our Lord's birth the political condition of the Jewish people was remarkable. The period of their complete independence under their native princes, the Maccabees, had, it is true, passed away ; the sceptre was fast slipping out of their hands, although the tribe of Judah still retained, under the protectorate of Rome, its political pre-eminence. So the words of Jacob were fulfilled, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh<sup>1</sup> come."

At the death of Herod, shortly after the birth of Christ, his dominions with the sanction of Augustus, Emperor of Rome, were divided amongst his sons. Archelaus succeeded his father in the government of Judæa ; but after a reign of about ten years the Roman Emperor deposed and banished him. Judæa was then united to the Roman Province of Syria, and ruled by a Roman Procurator under the Governor of Syria. Thus, when our Lord began His ministry, the sceptre

<sup>1</sup> The Peaceful One, *i.e.* the Messiah or Christ (Gen. xlix. 10).



had departed from Judah, and throughout the Gospel narrative we meet with "the usual features of a Roman province—the Prætorium ; the Publicans ; the tribute-money ; Roman soldiers and centurions ; Cæsar the only king."<sup>1</sup>

Deplorable as was the political state of the Jews, their moral and religious condition was, perhaps, even more so. Both priests and people were irreligious and corrupt. They knew that according to the prophecies the time for the Messiah to appear had come, but they looked only for a great temporal deliverer and king.<sup>2</sup> Deep as was the corruption of the nation, a faithful few were nevertheless still serving God, walking in His ways, and waiting for the consolation of Israel. They mourned over the sinfulness, misery and sadness they saw around, and longed for a Saviour who should deliver them from sin. While the Scribes and Pharisees and the mass of the nation cared only for a Messiah who should come in might and majesty, they were ready to believe in the Sufferer and Sin-bearer spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, Who should come in meekness and humility, blessing the poor in spirit, and setting up a Kingdom indeed, but not one of this world.

**Announcement of the Forerunner** (i. 5–25). Towards the close of the reign of Herod the Great, there lived in the hill country of Judæa, perhaps at Hebron,<sup>3</sup> an aged priest, of the course of Abia or

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson.

<sup>2</sup> The seven weeks, and the threescore and two weeks, each day being reckoned as a year, of Dan. ix. 25, had been fulfilled. There was a general expectation of Messiah's advent, at the very time when He really appeared.

<sup>3</sup> One of the oldest cities in the world, twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem, a Levitical and priestly city, and the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was also one of the six cities of refuge.



Abijah, named Zacharias. His wife Elisabeth was of the house of Aaron, and they belonged to that faithful remnant of God's people of whom we have spoken ; for St. Luke tells us, " they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." But, though happy in the love and service of God, there was one sorrow that lay heavy upon them—they were childless—they had no son. Their prayers for what Jewish parents always considered one of the greatest of earthly blessings, and a mark of Divine favour, had not been answered. They were now to learn that God often grants what He delays, and that when His time comes He gives us more than we have asked.

The priestly families from the time of David had been divided into twenty-four courses,<sup>1</sup> and each course supplied in turn for one week the Temple service.<sup>2</sup> Once more the turn for Zacharias' course to minister came round, and he left his home for the Holy City. Many times had he "executed the priest's office before God," but this visit to Jerusalem he would never forget—so new and strange a thing happened to him. He was in his appointed place at the Temple, probably at the time of the morning sacrifice. The sacrificing priest had slain the lamb, and sprinkled its blood upon the altar, and the priests had again assembled to draw lots, to decide who should offer the incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place. The prayers were said, the lots were cast, and it fell to Zacharias to perform this the most honourable of the priestly duties. Then he went up to the altar

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxiv. Only four of these courses appear to have returned from the Captivity in Babylon ; but they were divided, as before, into twenty-four, the old names being retained.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. ix. 25 ; Luke i. 23.



of burnt-offering with his assistants. While one filled a golden censer with frankincense, another took live coals from the altar in a golden vessel ; then, slowly mounting the steps that led to the Holy Place, they entered the sacred chamber, and were no longer visible to the assembled worshippers. Here the glare of day never entered ; but the golden lamp that rested upon the seven-branched candlestick was kept burning night and day. The golden altar of incense stood opposite the rich curtain or veil that hung before the entrance to the Holy of Holies, and on either side of it were the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick. The assistant priests performed their duties, and then withdrew, leaving the incensing priest alone in the Holy Place. Here he awaited the signal from the presiding priest to begin burning the incense on the golden altar. When this was given, the cloud of fragrant smoke rose up before God, and the people, falling down with one accord before the Lord, stretched forth their hands in silent prayers. For a short time, stillness prevailed throughout the Temple courts.

It was, we may suppose, at this solemn moment, when both priests and people were in supplication before God, that Zacharias saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right hand of the altar of incense ; “and when Zacharias saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.” The angel had come to announce to Zacharias the birth, in due time, of a son, whose office it should be to prepare, in the spirit and power of Elijah, the way for the long-promised Redeemer. Zacharias received incredulously the angel’s message. His unbelief brought its own punishment. He asked for a sign, and a sign was given ; but it came as a



judgment, depriving him of both speech and hearing,<sup>1</sup> until the very thing he had doubted should come to pass.

Meanwhile the people wondered why Zacharias tarried so long in the Holy Place, but when he came out, and instead of pronouncing the priestly blessing "beckoned unto them and remained speechless," they perceived he had seen a vision.

His week of service completed, Zacharias hastened away to his home in the hills, pondering deeply, as we may well believe, upon the strange things that had happened to him.

**The Ministry of Angels.** The ministry of angels having been brought strikingly before us, it will be well to give this miraculous agency a brief consideration.

In the Old Testament we read frequently of the ministry of angels. At certain marked periods of Israel's history they were employed as God's messengers or agents in the affairs of men, on various commissions of mercy and of judgment, punishing<sup>2</sup> guarding,<sup>3</sup> instructing,<sup>4</sup> or strengthening.<sup>5</sup> But it is remarkable that during the half century beginning just before the birth of Christ the instances of the ministry of angels are more numerous than in all the previous centuries of the world's history.

More than five hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the Angel Gabriel had been sent to the Prophet Daniel to make him "understand" many things about the future history of his people and especially about "the Messiah the Prince," and the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke i. 20 with i. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xix. ; 2 Kings xix. 35.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings vi. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Dan. ix. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Dan. x. 18.



time of His advent.<sup>1</sup> When the time had come, we find the same angel appearing to an aged priest to announce the birth of the Forerunner; while to the Virgin Mary he brought the greater news, and made known the profounder mystery, that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. We read much of the activity of the ministry of angels during our Lord's sojourn in the world,—how they heralded His birth, and came to Him in His seasons of sorest conflict, how they watched at His tomb and made known His resurrection to His sorrowing disciples. And after His ascension angels brought help and succour to the infant Church—releasing the Apostles St. John and St. Peter from prison, comforting St. Paul, instructing Cornelius, and smiting Herod.

Their visible agency has now been withdrawn, but we have warrant in Holy Writ for believing that these ministering spirits, though unseen by the eye of sense, are still sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. When the foundations of the earth were laid “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”<sup>2</sup> On the night of our Saviour's nativity, when in the birth of the Second Adam the fallen world was created anew, a multitude of the heavenly host again glorified God, and proclaimed peace to men. And at Christ's second advent, legions of angels will attend Him,<sup>3</sup> gathering His elect,<sup>4</sup> and casting out from the kingdom, all things that offend.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxv. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Job. xxxviii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxiv. 31.



## *CHAPTER XXVII.*

### **The Birth and Childhood of Jesus Christ.**

THE ANNUNCIATION—VISIT OF MARY TO ELISABETH  
—BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—BIRTH OF  
JESUS CHRIST—THE CIRCUMCISION—PRESENTATION  
IN THE TEMPLE — RESIDENCE AT  
NAZARETH—FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

**THE Annunciation** (i. 26–38). Six months after his visit to Zacharias in the Temple, the angel Gabriel was sent on a similar but far more important mission to a virgin dwelling in the obscure little town of Nazareth, amid the Galilean hills. To her, who was to be for ever afterwards called “Blessed,” the angel announced that at last the Messiah was come into the world, and that she was chosen by God to be His mother. In answer to her wondering exclamation how such a thing could be,<sup>1</sup> the Angel explained to her that the Child to be born should know no earthly father, but should be “the Son of the Highest,” and Mary, in her humility and faith, was content that it should be unto her according to the angel’s word. The words of the Annunciation were an epitome of the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> Mary’s question did not imply doubt, but only wonder how all was to be accomplished.



In His birth and ministry types and prophecies were to be alike fulfilled. The Promises to Abraham and to David were now to be made good ; the shadows to become a "body" ; the hopes of Psalmists and the aspirations of generations of God's servants were all to be realized.<sup>1</sup> The Son of the Virgin should be "Holy, the Son of God,"<sup>2</sup> and yet, "born of a woman," true man<sup>3</sup> ; the representative of the human race, **Jesus**, the Saviour of the World.

**Mary's Visit to Elisabeth** (i. 39-45). The Angel had told Mary of the joyful expectations of her kinswoman<sup>4</sup> Elisabeth. A note of sympathy was at once struck between the two. And as the days went on, Mary's heart grew too full for her any longer to contain her great secret. She must confide it to some one, and to whom better than to Elisabeth, the expectant mother of the Forerunner. So Mary arose, and went in haste to the home of Elisabeth amongst the hills of Judæa, to which a journey of some four or five days would bring her. Elisabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, greeted her young relative with an outburst of rapturous spiritual joy. The angel's message was confirmed, and Mary, inspired now herself, with the ancient prophecies crowding upon her memory, gave utterance to that hymn, which may indeed be reckoned as the first in a long roll of sacred poetry, by which the Christian Church has been consoled, and its faith strengthened, from that day to this.

**The Magnificat** (i. 46-55). This glorious hymn, recalling, by its often similarity of expression, the song of Hannah, is full of Old Testament thought. Yet it

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 35, R.V.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> The original word is general. So rightly, R.V. Luke i. 36.



goes beyond it. For in the ardour and purity of her faith Mary regards the mystery of the Incarnation as already set forth, and speaks of what God will do by His Son as if it were already done. She uses the past tense throughout, as though the whole scheme of redemption were involved, as indeed it was, in the miracle of the Conception.

**The Birth and Circumcision of John the Baptist** (i. 56-66). After a stay of three months with Elisabeth, Mary returned to her own home. Shortly after her departure, the angel's words to Zacharias were fulfilled in their season. The child, whose birth he had prophesied was born ; and when Elisabeth's neighbours and kinsfolk "heard how the Lord had shewed mercy upon her, they rejoiced with her." On the eighth day after his birth, there was, it would seem, a family gathering, at the circumcision of the child. St. Luke records how greatly the friends were astonished when first Elisabeth, and then on appeal by signs, the deaf and dumb Zacharias, insisted on the name of "John" being given to the infant. Zacharias, on the instant, recovered his speech and hearing, and while all present were meditating upon "What manner of child shall this be !" he "was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied."

**The Benedictus** (i. 67-80). Zacharias' prophecy took the form of a hymn, which, like the Magnificat, has for many centuries been used as a canticle in the services of the Church. The hymn itself is Hebrew, both in structure and tone. The mercies of God to His people, and the office and work of the Baptist are its theme. Yet in the thought of them who were sitting in darkness there seems to be a recognition of the Messiah's work being co-extensive with the world.



Thus it becomes a hymn fit for Christian use, and "a continual acknowledgment of the Communion of Saints under the two dispensations."

**The Birth of Jesus Christ** (ii. 1-7). The greatest event in the history of the world, the advent of the long-promised Saviour, was now close at hand. The promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head had tarried long, and mankind, except indeed the chosen people, had for the most part, lived and died without any certain knowledge of God or of His promise of a Redeemer. Why was this? Why were the nations left in ignorance so long? We can only answer in St. Paul's words: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" The question should be put aside as one quite beyond us. All that we can say is that the delay served to make more and more evident man's need of redemption, and his inability to redeem himself. Empires had risen to power, nations had become civilized, the human intellect had been cultivated; the arts of poetry, sculpture and architecture had attained to a perfection that still excites our wonder and admiration.

But if we ask, what was the moral and religious condition of these nations? we find that they were sunk in the grossest idolatry and social degradation. In the words of St. Paul, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped



and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever.”<sup>1</sup> How needful, then, was a Redeemer Who should be “a light to lighten the Gentiles” as well as “the glory of God’s people of Israel.”

Peace at this time was universal throughout the Roman Empire. The civil wars of the preceding century had terminated in the triumph of Octavianus, who became Emperor of Rome, and master of the civilized world, with the title of Cæsar Augustus ;<sup>2</sup> and now, wishing to ascertain the population and wealth of the various countries over which he reigned, he issued a decree “that all the world,” that is, all the countries subject to his rule, “should be taxed” or enrolled. For this purpose every one went to his own city.<sup>3</sup> Thus it came to pass that Joseph of Nazareth was obliged, as one of the house and lineage of David, to journey to Bethlehem, the city of David, taking with him Mary, who by descent was also of the Royal family.’

It is the custom in Eastern towns to provide a place of accommodation for travellers—a *khan* or *caravan-serai*—where they may find shelter. This was no doubt the “inn” that Joseph and Mary found already full when they arrived at Bethlehem ; and the local tradition in Jerome’s time was that they took refuge in one of the limestone caves—half-dwelling half-stable—

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 21-25.

<sup>2</sup> “Cæsar” was not the name of any one Roman Emperor in particular, but the general title of all the Roman Emperors, in the same way as “Pharaoh” was the title of the Egyptian Kings.

<sup>3</sup> The elder Lightfoot says that there were two enrolments made by Cyrenius, or Quirinus : this was the first, made during the first period of Cyrenius holding office as Proprætor or Governor of Syria. His two periods of office appear to have been B.C. 4-1, and A.D. 6-11. The Romans enrolled people at their place of residence : the Jews at their ancestral home.



that are so numerous in Palestine : and here Mary “brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger”<sup>1</sup> That same night shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks on the downs near Bethlehem. Suddenly they were surrounded by the Shechinah, or bright cloud of the Divine Presence, and the birth of the Messiah was announced to them by the angel of the Lord. Scarcely had the angel given them a sign whereby they might prove the truth of his words, when he was surrounded by “a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,” and saying “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”<sup>2</sup> As soon as this first Christmas carol, heralding the Peace which the Messiah should make “between His Father and all mankind” was sung, and the glorious vision had passed away, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and there they found “the babe lying in a manger.”

It may be well, before passing on, to consider briefly this great fact of the *Incarnation*, or *the coming of the Son of God in the flesh*.

1. *The Second Person of the Holy Trinity took our whole human nature*, and so God and Man became “One Christ ;” “not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh : but by taking of the Manhood into God :” and so He was “perfect God and perfect Man : of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.”

2. *In becoming man God the Son emptied Himself of His glory—laid it aside :—*“Being in the form of God,

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This reading of our A.V. is supported by the Greek Fathers. The Vulgate, or Latin Version, followed by the Latin Fathers, is “Peace to men of good-will.” The R.V. has adopted a rendering akin to this latter. The change is much to be regretted.



(He) counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”<sup>1</sup>

3. *As man He was really born into the world, and became subject to all the sinless infirmities of our nature—hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, death.*<sup>2</sup>

4. *As man He was possessed of a human soul, and so, like other men, He had a human will, and felt the emotions of joy, sorrow, pity, anger.*<sup>3</sup>

5. *As God He forgave sins, raised the dead to life, and having accomplished the great work of redemption on the cross, reunited His human soul and human body ; glorifying both with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.*

Such is the doctrine of the Incarnation. Yet wonderful and profound as it is, it has pleased God the Holy Spirit to reveal to us this, the very deepest of mysteries, in words that will reach the heart of a child. And hence from our very earliest years we learn, unconsciously almost, of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of man.

These first two chapters of St. Luke are exceedingly precious. But for them we might have supposed that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity entered into the Son of Mary and dwelt within Him, as we believe the Third Person may enter into one of us, and dwell within us. All the subsequent narrative might perhaps have been explained by this theory,—the Son of God within the Man Jesus enabling Him to

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 6–8. R.V.    <sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 2 ; John iv. 6, 7 ; Mark xv. 15, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Luke x. 21, xix. 41 ; John xi. 35 ; Mark iii. 5.



work all those miracles. But all our faith, all our hopes, would have been shattered ; for the Son of God would not have died for us any more than the Holy Ghost dies in one of His martyrs at the stake. The *man* Jesus, deserted by the Son of God, would now only be numbered with the most favoured of the Saints, instead of pleading for us on the very throne of God.

St. Luke's Gospel of the Childhood forbids all error on this point. From the very Conception, the Child was "the Son of the Highest," One "Whose goings forth were from everlasting."<sup>1</sup> It was no natural birth. The Mother was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, therefore "that holy Thing" that was born of her was from the first "the Son of God."

Therefore was Elisabeth inspired to salute her as "the Mother of my Lord."

Therefore the angels declared the new-born Babe to be the "Saviour," "Christ the Lord."

That this child of man, born of a woman, was from the moment of birth, yea, as our Creed is careful to add, from the moment of conception, the Son of God, is what we mean by the doctrine of the Incarnation.

This is the doctrine to which the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the water, as the instrument of Jesus Christ's baptism, and the blood, shed from the Cross, all bear witness.<sup>2</sup>

It is the corner-stone of our faith.

"He that confesseth not that Jesus Christ *is come in the flesh* is not of God."

**The Circumcision** (ii. 21). On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised, for "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren ;"<sup>3</sup> and His

<sup>1</sup> Micah v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John v. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 17.



name was called JESUS, as God had commanded by the angel.

**The Presentation in the Temple** (ii. 22-38). About six weeks after the birth of the holy Child, His parents carried Him to Jerusalem from Bethlehem, a distance of between five and six miles.

There were two reasons for this :—

1. Mary had to present the offering required of every mother by the law of Moses when the days of her purification were accomplished.

2. Jesus, as a first-born Son, had to be dedicated to the Lord in His Temple ; for when God slew the first-born in Egypt He commanded that all the first-born sons should be given to Him.<sup>1</sup>

Mary's offerings had been made, and the holy Child presented to the Lord, when Simeon, a just and devout man, who had waited for the consolation of Israel, gently taking the Divine Infant from the arms of His Mother, and blessing God, exclaimed, " Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation ; " <sup>2</sup> and then, speaking by the Spirit, he prophesied that the holy Child should not only be " a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel ; " but also " a sign which should be spoken against "—causing to many, even to His mother, much searching of the heart.<sup>3</sup> God's promise to His servant, that he should not die " before he had seen the Lord's Christ," was fulfilled, and he was willing now to depart and be at rest.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Simeon uses the indicative mood, " lettest," and not the imperative " let," as is sometimes supposed. He does not ask God to release him, but only declares that God is releasing him peacefully.

<sup>3</sup> Simeon doubtless had in his mind Isa. xlix., especially verses 2, 6, 9.



The aged prophetess Anna<sup>1</sup> also gave thanks unto God, and spoke of the infant Messiah to all who, like herself, had been looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

**The return to Nazareth** (ii. 39, 40). Mary and Joseph tarried no longer in Bethlehem ; but found a safer dwelling-place at their old home in Nazareth. For thirty years Jesus led, amongst the hills of Galilee, a most secluded life, of the details of which we know nothing. One, and only one, most interesting glimpse of our Lord's boyhood is given by the Evangelist St. Luke, and to that we turn.

**Christ amongst the Doctors** (ii. 41-52). Every year Mary and Joseph went up to the Feast of the Passover, and when Jesus had completed His twelfth year they took Him with them.<sup>2</sup>

The Feast of the Passover, and the other holy festivals held at Jerusalem, were very interesting features in the national and religious life of the Israelitish people ; and the more we know and understand of this life the more real will the Gospel history and the ministry of our Lord appear to us.

If on the eve of one of these festivals we could suppose ourselves on some elevated spot from which we could get a view of the whole country, we should see everywhere bands of pilgrims, mostly on foot, pouring out of every town and village, leaving the safety of their homes and property to the care of their Heavenly Father,<sup>3</sup> and threading their way over plain and valley and hill onwards towards the Holy City. We should hear them singing the songs of Zion : "How amiable

<sup>1</sup> The fact that Anna was of the tribe of Aser shows us that the ten tribes had by no means disappeared from the Holy Land.

<sup>2</sup> See note C at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 24.



are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.”  
“ I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem ! . . . whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to give thanks to the Name of the Lord.”

It was one of these pilgrim journeys in which “kinsfolk and acquaintance” mingled pleasantly, that Jesus joined with His parents at the age of twelve years. It was His first Passover, and eagerly, joyfully no doubt, He trod the streets of Jerusalem, and the Courts of His Father's House.

The festival over, the large company of Galilean pilgrims began their homeward journey. Mary and Joseph supposed that Jesus was with them, but when they halted for the night, and sought Him amongst their friends and neighbours He was nowhere to be found. They hastened “back to Jerusalem, seeking Him.” It was not till the next day, the third day from the day of starting, that they found Him, in a school of the Rabbis, 'or learned men, attached to the Temple, “sitting in the midst of the doctors” (or professors), listening modestly to them, and “asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” To His anxious mother's complaint, “Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?” Jesus answered, “How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about *My Father's* business?”<sup>1</sup>

Once more we lose sight of the holy Youth ; until, after the lapse of eighteen more years, spent in the

<sup>1</sup> This reply of Jesus has been called the “first word of the Eternal Spirit in the human spirit of the Person of the God-Man.” The R.V. adopts the rendering “in My Father's house.” Cf. John ii. 16.



quiet retirement of Nazareth, we see Him again, and then it is as the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world.

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*NOTES.*

**A. On the Angel's Words to Mary.**

The Angel, in his words of annunciation, summed up the whole prophetic teaching of the Old Testament. The name "Jesus" would recall to the Virgin's mind the great leader of her people into the promised land. That her Son was to be "The Son of the Highest," and the Heir of David on his throne, would remind her of such passages as 2 Sam. vii. 12; Isa. ix. 6, 7, xi. 1, 10, xvi. 5; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 24; Dan. ii. 44; Hos. iii. 5; Mic. v. 4; Psa. xlv. 6, cxxxii. 11.

**B. On the Manger in Bethlehem.**

"It is common to find," says a late missionary in Palestine, "two sides of a room, where the native farmer resides with his cattle, filled up with these mangers, and the remainder elevated two feet higher for the accommodation of the family. These mangers are built of small stones and mortar in the shape of a box or kneading-trough; and when cleaned up and white-washed, as they often are in summer, they do very well to lay little babies in. Indeed our own children have slept there in our rude summer retreats in the mountains."—DR. THOMSON, *The Land and the Book*.

**C. On our Lord's Visit to Jerusalem as a Boy.**

In ordinary Jewish families the parents were the teachers of their children; but after the Babylonish Captivity, when the father was frequently engaged in commerce, and consequently often absent from his family, schools were established. The mother was still, however, the child's earliest teacher in New Testament times. When a boy had completed his twelfth



year he was presented to the Lord, and inducted into the community in a solemn and impressive manner. He would now of course attend the Festivals with his parents, and accordingly we read that when Jesus "was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem." The observance was in fact the Jewish equivalent for our Rite of Confirmation.



## *CHAPTER XXVIII.*

### **Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus Christ.**

#### **THE CALL TO REPENTANCE—OUR LORD'S BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION.**

**THE** Preaching of John the Baptist (iii. 1-18). The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. The Messiah had come. The King of Israel was about to manifest Himself to his chosen people. But were they ready to receive him? to welcome Him? Would He find them meet subjects for His spiritual kingdom?

Nationally, as we have said, from the highest to the lowest they were corrupt. The barren fig-tree, with its fair show of leaves, was the type of their spiritual state. Priests and Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, rulers and people were all alike the slaves of a religious system which had hardened into "burdens grievous to be borne."

This was the state of things when John the Baptist, the Son of Zacharias, suddenly appeared,<sup>1</sup> and a voice was heard from the lonely wilderness, sternly calling upon the whole nation to trust no longer to their descent from Abraham, without imitating his faith,

<sup>1</sup> We should notice the very precise note of time which St. Luke gives in iii. 1, 2.



but to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. The very stones beneath their feet might sooner be turned into true children of Abraham than they, if they continued in their evil and mistaken course. St. Luke alone records the instructions which John gave to the different classes of people who resorted to him. The instructions were eminently suited to the habits of each class, and to the temptations to which each was specially liable.

St. John's preaching was not in vain. Multitudes came to him from every quarter, and daily he baptized them in the abundant waters of Jordan. He warned them that a Mightier One than himself was coming, Who should baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire : Who would carry in His hand His winnowing fan, gathering the wheat into His garner, but burning up the chaff with fire unquenchable.<sup>1</sup>

**The Baptism of our Lord** (iii. 21, 22). It was at the close of one of these days, that Jesus presented Himself to John for baptism. The accounts of the baptism given us by the first three Evangelists are very similar.<sup>2</sup> But it is to St. Luke alone that we owe the very interesting notices that our Lord was "praying" when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him ; and that the descent was "in bodily shape."<sup>3</sup>

**The Temptation of our Lord** (iv. 1-13). Our Lord was now "about thirty years of age."<sup>4</sup> He had

<sup>1</sup> On concluding his notice of the Baptist's teaching, St. Luke mentions (iii. 19, 20) his imprisonment, though, in reality, it occurred some time afterwards.

St. Luke omits the account of St. John's hesitation and our Lord's answer, given by St. Matthew.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Luke iii. 23- "Began to be about thirty years of age," A.V. ; "When He began *to teach*, was about thirty years of age," R.V.



reached the age when the Levites were permitted to enter upon the service of the Tabernacle,<sup>1</sup> and the Scribes to teach in public.<sup>2</sup> The time therefore had arrived for Him to commence His Ministry amongst men, and to go "about doing good." But the commencement must be preceded by a time of seclusion, and secret preparation. Therefore "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness." There, for forty days, He remained, eating nothing, but sustained, we may well believe, by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the sense of His Heavenly Father's presence. Yet all the time, He was "tempted of the Devil." At the end of the forty days fasting, "He afterwards hungered." The tempter took advantage of the hunger to come with his fiercest and sharpest attacks.

Temptation itself, we should remember, is not sin ; the yielding to it is the sin. Jesus was tempted, but sinless. Our Lord could have exercised His miraculous power to remove the Tempter from His presence ; but, as man, He was to be tempted in all points like as we are. He therefore used no other weapon to repel the Tempter than the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This weapon may be wielded by the weakest of His people.

If we consider carefully the three special temptations put before our Lord by the Devil, we shall see that they were all temptations to hasten unduly God's time, and the accomplishment of the Messiah's work.

Our Lord's "hunger was to him but as the key and interpreter to all the hunger, all the need, all the dis-

<sup>1</sup> Numb. iv. 3, 47. Cf. also Gen. xli. 46 ; 2. Sam. v. 4.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke takes the opportunity of stating Jesus Christ's age to give His pedigree. See note B at the end of the chapter.



trass which the children of Adam had ever felt, or should ever feel. . . . To be able to stay all this, to speak the word and bring it all to an end, who, with a sinful and therefore a selfish heart, is at all in a position to estimate what this temptation was to the great Lover of the bodies and souls of men?" To have yielded would have been to destroy faith and love and to have dissociated Himself for ever from that human family which He came to redeem and to save.

Again, when our blessed Lord was leaving the world He told His disciples that all power was given to Him in Heaven and earth. "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings."<sup>1</sup> To obtain this power at once, not indeed for the low object of personal ambition, but for the opportunities it would at once offer of "binding up the broken-hearted" and bringing joy and peace to a sin-laden world, was the proposal of Satan. How keen must have been the trial! To gain all, and without the suffering, and without the laid-down life, which the Messiah of prophecy was bound to pass through and to give! This was the temptation.

So, too, in the Temptation to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple. Had Jesus Christ yielded, He might indeed have gained at once the applause and homage of the people. But then there would have been no taking up the cross, and the words would never have been true, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

In this last temptation Satan quoted a verse from the ninety-first Psalm. In this way he assumed the guise of an angel of light.<sup>1</sup> But the quotation was

<sup>1</sup> Matt, xxviii. 18 ; Rev. xvii. 14.



incorrect and mutilated. The all-important clause, "to keep thee in all thy ways," was omitted. That clause teaches us that to depend upon God's protecting care in the hour of danger, and when in the way that He appoints us is faith. The omission of the clause would lead to presumption, for it would tempt us to rush needlessly into peril for our own gratification, expecting God to carry us safely through. This is made plain by our Lord's answer, "Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God."<sup>1</sup>

Our Lord's use of the Holy Scriptures in His answers to Satan is very instructive. We learn from it how to wield the "sword of the Spirit," and to find in that armoury every needful weapon. Or, thinking of the Scriptures as the well, or brook, of salvation, our Lord becomes the antitype of David, and teaches us how to choose our smooth stones, wherewith to slay our spiritual foe.

The exact way in which these temptations were brought about—whether our Lord stood bodily upon the "high mountain" and on "the pinnacle of the Temple," or was in these places only "in the spirit"<sup>2</sup>—we cannot positively know, nor is it a matter for mere speculation. It is sufficient for us to feel assured that the Evil One was, as is plainly asserted, present to our Lord in his own proper person, and that the temptation was *from without*, and not *from within*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut. vi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 2 Cor. xii. 3, "Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth," where St. Paul's expression of doubt, as to the nature of the revelation, cannot be supposed for one moment to throw any doubt upon its *reality*. As we must believe that our Lord saw "all the kingdoms of the world" *in the spirit*, so we may well believe it was *in the spirit* also that He stood "on the pinnacle of the Temple."

<sup>3</sup> On the difference in the order of the temptation between St. Matthew and St. Luke, see note C at the end of the chapter.



The temptations over, the Devil left our Lord "for a season."<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew tells us that "angels came and ministered unto Him." They who are appointed to "minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,"<sup>2</sup> came now, it may be, as again in the garden to strengthen Him; perhaps, as some have suggested, to bring food to Him, fulfilling in its highest sense the Psalmist's words, "Man did eat angel's food."

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NOTES.

**A. On the words "in bodily shape" in Luke iii. 22.**

We must not suppose that there was any incarnation of the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine says, "There was a certain visible appearance for the moment, like the flame in the bush at Sinai, that the bodily eye of the Baptist might have *a sign* of the presence of the Third Person of the Trinity. The bodily form appeared for the time to show what was required, and then ceased to be."

**B. On the Genealogies of our Lord, Matt. i. 1-18; Luke iii. 23-38.**

The Jews had two methods of reckoning a genealogy (1) The legal method (2) The natural method. The legal method was used when it was desired to trace the representative of the race or family, throughout. Thus if A and B were brothers, and A died without a son, B's son C would be reckoned as, and called the son of A, as being his *legal* representative. The natural method simply gives the descent from father to son. This consideration explains the differences between the genealogies of our Lord given by St. Matthew and St. Luke respectively. St. Matthew gives the legal descent of our Lord,

<sup>1</sup> "Doubtless Jesus had many other personal conflicts with Satan of a like kind in those long vigils in solitude, but they are veiled from us."  
—ARCHDEACON NORRIS.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. i. 14.



whilst St. Luke gives the natural descent. St. Matthew traces it *downwards* from Abraham to our Lord ; St. Luke *upwards* from our Lord to Adam, and, in accordance with the design of his Gospel, to God.

### C. On the order of our Lord's Temptations.

It is remarkable that St. Matthew and St. Luke invert the order of the last two temptations. We cannot tell the reason of this, nor is it needful that we should be able to do so. It is probable that St. Matthew follows the actual order in which the temptations happened, whilst St. Luke follows rather the order suggested by the threefold nature of man, the "body, soul, and spirit" (1 Thess. v. 23). In this he follows St. John, who divides all sin into the three heads, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16).



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### The Galilean Ministry.

CHRIST AT NAZARETH—VISIT TO CAPERNAUM—ON  
THE LAKE OF GENNESARET—MIRACLES—CALL  
OF LEVI.

**THE Visit to Nazareth** (iv. 14-30). The preparation for Jesus Christ's public ministry was now completed. It began, as we learn from St. John, with a brief visit to the scene of the Baptist's work on the banks of Jordan, and by the gracious miracle at Cana. To this succeeded a sojourn, interrupted by a second short visit to Galilee, of several months in Jerusalem and Judæa.<sup>1</sup> About this earlier ministry the first three Evangelists are entirely silent. It was the opportunity which our Lord gave to the Rulers and teachers of the people to acknowledge Him. They rejected it. Then, when His life was no longer safe in that province where their influence was most powerful, Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." It is at this point that the Synoptic Gospels commence their narrative of our Lord's ministry.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John i. 29-v. 47. Possibly St. Luke alludes to the two Galilee visits in iv. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> The length of Jesus Christ's ministry was in all about three years; the eight or nine months of the early ministry recorded by St. John, and the two years and a quarter from the time at which we have now arrived.







The first place visited appears to have been Nazareth, the little secluded city amid the Galilean hills in which our Saviour had spent His childhood, youth, and early manhood.<sup>1</sup> During those years, His "custom" had been to worship regularly in the synagogue on the sabbath day. He did now, on this visit, as He had ever been wont to do.

His fame as a Teacher and a doer of miracles induced the people of Nazareth to listen to Him, Whom they still believed to be simply the "son of Joseph." The service of the synagogue proceeded as usual. The "ruler" read the prayers, while the people, standing, answered Amen. Singing of the psalms followed, then the first and second lessons—the one taken from the Law, the other from the Prophets—which were usually read standing by any of the Rabbis who might be present; and, lastly, the "word of exhortation." In the instance before us, when the time came for the second lesson, the "minister," or servant of the synagogue,<sup>2</sup> handed the prophecies of Isaiah to our Lord, Who, having "stood up for to read," unrolled the sacred book, and read that portion of it that refers to the anointing of the Messiah with the Holy Ghost. Having read, He sat down, as was usual, to give an address.

The Evangelist gives us a lively picture of the keen interest with which our Lord was regarded by the congregation. "The eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened upon Him." The first words

<sup>1</sup> A recent traveller says of Nazareth: "No great road led up to this sunny nook. No traffic came to it, no legions marched through it. Trade, war, adventure, pleasure, pomp, passed by it, flowing from west to east, from east to west, along the Roman road."

<sup>2</sup> An official answering to some extent to the clerk or vergers of our own churches.



which Jesus uttered excited at first the astonishment, and then by degrees, as it would seem, the jealousy of His hearers. St. Luke has preserved for us the opening sentence only of our Lord's commentary on the passage He had read. Doubtless, in what He went on to say, there was sufficient to show that He claimed to be the long-expected Messiah. It was this that "offended" His countrymen. "Is not this Joseph's Son?" they exclaimed.

Our Lord told them that no prophet is accepted in his own country; and He warned them of the consequences of their unbelief. When the Israelites rejected their own prophets, the blessings that might have been theirs were given to strangers and Gentiles, as in the instances of the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian.<sup>1</sup> This was more than they could bear.

In their mad fury at having Gentiles held up to them as examples, they expelled Jesus from the synagogue, and attempted to kill Him.<sup>2</sup> He escaped from them. "Passing through the midst of them, He went His way." How the escape was effected we are not told. Some suppose that Jesus exerted His miraculous power, whilst others think that the dignity and majesty of His appearance were such as to overawe His enemies.<sup>3</sup> In any case, the event teaches us that when our Lord did at last lay down His life, it was a voluntary act, done of His own free will.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "Elias," "Eliseus" and "Sarepta" of our A.V. are the Greek forms of "Elijah," "Elisha," and "Zarephath" respectively. The R.V. very properly adopts the Old Testament forms of the names.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> We may compare John vii. 30, 44, viii. 59, x. 39, 40, and Psa. xviii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> See John x. 18.



**Visit to Capernaum** (iv. 31-41). Driven from Nazareth, our Lord "came down<sup>1</sup> to Capernaum."

However suitable an abode Nazareth had been for our Lord, on account of its seclusion, up to the commencement of His public life, it is not likely He would have continued to live there after His ministry had once begun, even if the incident just related had not taken place. Be this as it may, the city of Capernaum, situated in the most populous district of Palestine, on the great commercial highway from Damascus to the South and to the Mediterranean, now became the centre from which He made His circuits through Galilee. From this time, it is known in the Gospels as "His own city."

The sojourn in Capernaum was one probably of some days, if not weeks.<sup>2</sup> His teaching in the synagogue on the sabbath, and His miracles of healing the man with "a spirit of an unclean devil," and Peter's mother-in-law, excited the admiration and wonder of the people. And as yet there was no opposition. Numbers came to be healed, and were healed "every one."<sup>3</sup>

**Retirement to a Desert Place** (iv. 42-44). A sabbath, so busy and exciting, was followed,<sup>4</sup> as it

<sup>1</sup> This expression accurately describes the character of the journey; a descent from the hill country of Nazareth to the much lower level of the Lake of Gennesaret.

<sup>2</sup> In Luke iv. 31 A.V. the reading "days" is adopted; in R.V. "day."

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke adds that the devils bore witness to Him as "Christ." But He suffered them not to speak, refusing to accept testimony from the Evil One.

<sup>4</sup> The description which St. Luke, as also St. Matthew (viii. 14-17) and St. Mark (i. 21-34), give of the work of this sabbath day, affords "the best illustration of the life of the 'Good Physician,' of which the rarest originality was that 'He went about doing good'" (Acts x. 38).—  
ARCHDEACON FARRAR.



would seem, by exhaustion, not so much of body, as of spirit. To gain the rest He needed, Jesus retired alone, into a desert place, and as St. Mark tells us, "there prayed." But the people soon found Him out, and besought Him to remain with them. This could not be. Other cities must be visited, and other districts hear the Word of God.

**On the Lake of Gennesaret** (v. 1-11). It is probable that throughout this tour our Lord was accompanied by a multitude of people. When at last He returned to the lake side, Jesus, to be free from the pressure of the ever increasing numbers, taught the people from a ship belonging to Simon Peter, and which for convenience of teaching and hearing was "thrust out a little from the land."

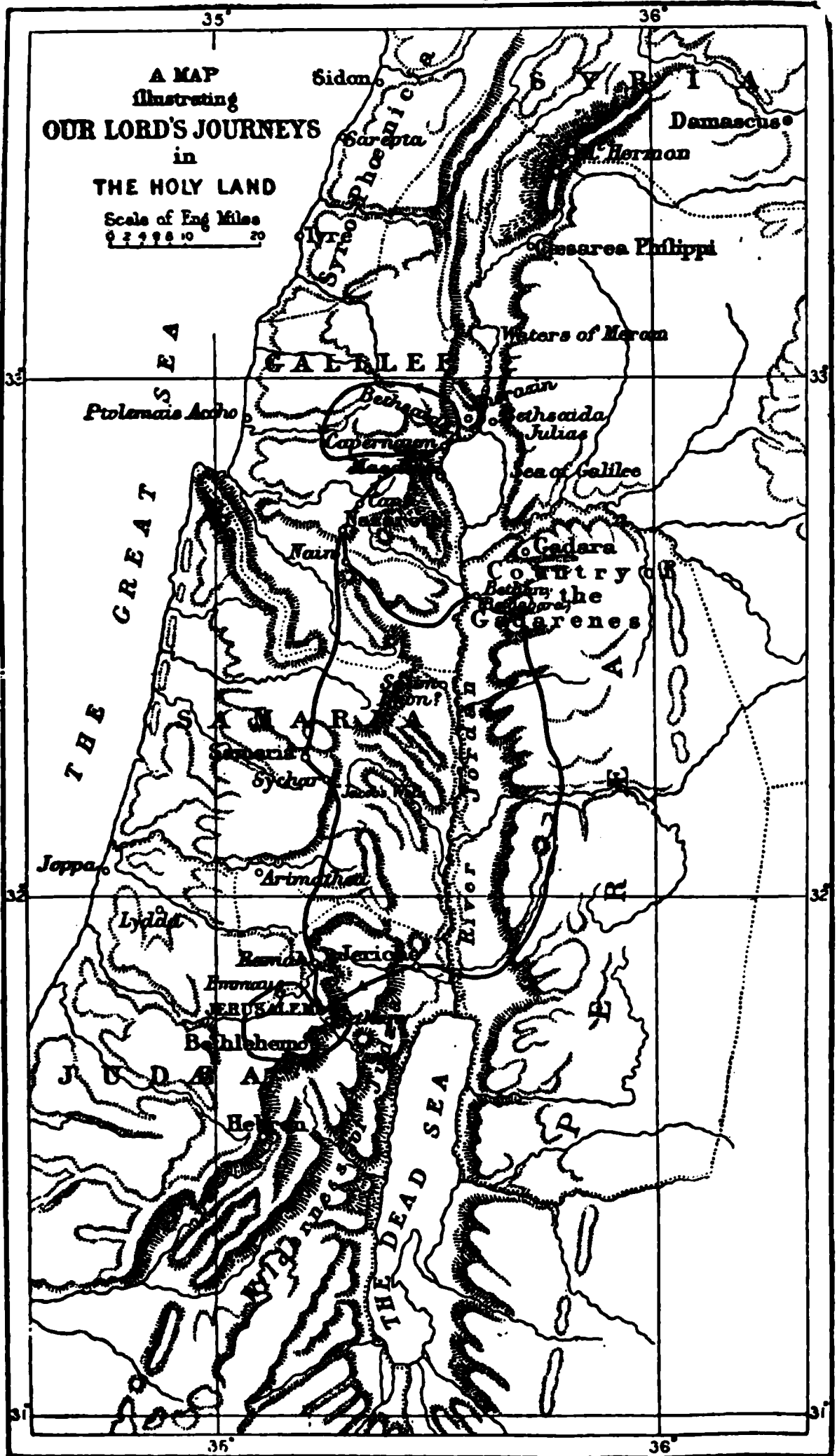
The teaching concluded, Simon was rewarded for the loan of his boat with a miraculous draught of fishes. He and his companions had toiled all night, and had taken nothing. Now, their net brake by reason of the quantity of fish taken. The effect upon St. Peter was very remarkable. He and his companions were not only astonished, but filled with awe; for by this sign our Lord had made known to them something of His own greatness, power, and holiness. They felt that they, the unholy, stood in the presence of the Holy One. So Simon "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He said this, not in the temper of those who beg Christ to depart because they desire not the knowledge of His ways, but in the spirit of one suddenly made aware of his own guilt, weakness, and insufficiency. Our Lord's answer was accordingly one of peace and reassurance—"Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men;" and when they



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey

## A MAP Illustrating OUR LORD'S JOURNEYS in THE HOLY LAND

Scale of Eng Miles  
0 2 4 6 8 10 20





had brought the ship to land Simon and his brother Andrew, and their companions, James and John the sons of Zebedee, forsook all and followed Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion our Lord had preached more by acts than by words ; and it was often so. His acts were symbolic. "The deeds of Him Who is the Word are themselves also, and are intended to be, words for us."<sup>2</sup> His miracles had a spiritual and typical teaching and significance. By this great draught of fishes how much had Simon Peter and his fellow-disciples been made to know both about themselves and Christ, and about the great work of taking men in the Gospel net, for which He designed them.

In what, we may ask, did this miracle consist? A very great and even unusual haul of fish would not be of itself a miracle. The coincidence of the haul with our Lord's command to let down the net made that miraculous which otherwise would not have been so.

**The healing of a Leper** (v. 12-15). There was probably an interval between the last incident, and this present one, which was occupied by the Sermon on the Mount. St. Matthew places this miracle immediately after the sermon. The "certain city" may perhaps have been a place called Hattîn, near which the Sermon on the Mount is thought to have been preached. St. Luke alone mentions that the man was "full" of leprosy, implying that the disease had covered the whole body, and that the sufferer

<sup>1</sup> For the effect upon Simon Peter, cf. Isa. vi. 5. The promise to him was first fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 41). On the date of this call of St. Peter and his companions, see note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine, quoted by Archbishop Trench.



therefore was treated, according to the law, as if he were clean.<sup>1</sup>

**Retirement: Healing of the Paralytic** (v. 16-26). Again, the Lord retired for a time, perhaps to avoid the Galilean crowd, ready, under excitement and the spur of the moment, to come and make Him a king, and so hasten unduly the end of His work and ministry.

When Jesus once more came into public, He was confronted by the emissaries from the Sanhedrin. Previously to this Galilean visit, He had been driven from Jerusalem by the malignity of the rulers. These had now sent their spies after Him. Their purpose was to "catch Him," either in His teaching, or His works. An opportunity soon occurred at the healing of the paralytic.<sup>2</sup> The assurance which our Lord gave to the paralytic that his "sins were forgiven" gave it to them, and they seized it. They accused Him of "blasphemy." As a test and proof of His right to forgive sins, and therefore of His Messiahship, Jesus healed the man. For the moment, the enthusiasm of the people, perhaps even of the emissaries themselves,<sup>3</sup> was so great, that the attack failed.

**Call of St. Matthew** (v. 27-32). Following soon after the last incident came the call of Levi, or Matthew,<sup>4</sup> and the cavilling which arose amongst His

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xiii. 13. We may compare with our Lord's touching the leper, the acts of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 34).

<sup>2</sup> We should note the difference in reading in Luke v. 17. The A.V. has, "the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them." The R.V., "the power of the Lord was with Him to heal."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John vii. 45, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Doubtless the two are identical. Our Lord may have given Levi the surname of Matthew, or "God's gift," on his call, as he gave the surname of Cephas or Peter to Simon.



opponents at our Lord's joining the farewell feast which the publican made to his friends.

**The Question about Fasting** (v. 33-35); **the Parables of the "Patched Garment,"** and **"the New Wine in Old Bottles"** (v. 36-39) follow next in St. Luke's account, in the same sequence as St. Matthew.<sup>1</sup>

**The Observance of the Sabbath** (vi. 1-11). The opponents continued to watch the Lord. They found fault with His disciples for plucking ears of corn on one sabbath,<sup>2</sup> and were "filled with madness," because Jesus Himself healed the withered hand on another. The opportunity was afforded to Him of teaching that acts of necessity are lawful, even on the sabbath, and that works of mercy and love are the true way of keeping it.<sup>3</sup>

**Retirement and Call of the Twelve** (vi. 12-16). Again, the Lord sought for opportunity of prayer. This time it was in "the mountain," or hilly country. Whilst here, Jesus selected twelve from amongst the company of His disciples, to whom He gave the distinguishing title of Apostles, and who henceforth were to be His special companions and "friends."

**The Sermon on the Mount** (vi. 17-49). Afterwards our Lord came down with them, and standing on a level spot,<sup>4</sup> healed many, so that "the

<sup>1</sup> See further, above, chapter iv.

<sup>2</sup> See note C at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> In the healing of the man with the withered hand, St. Luke alone mentions that it was his right hand; that the Scribes and Pharisees were those who "watched" the Lord; that He knew their thoughts; that the man "arose and stood forth," and that they were "filled with madness." See note D at the end of the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> See note E at the end of the chapter,



whole multitude sought to touch Him : for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all." Then, "lifting up His eyes on His disciples," or gazing earnestly upon them, He delivered the discourse known as the "Sermon on the Mount."

St. Matthew and St. Luke, under the aid and direction of the Holy Spirit, report this sermon somewhat differently, each selecting such portions as seemed best adapted to those for whom especially he wrote. St. Matthew, writing, as we have seen, for Jewish Christians, dwells upon what is peculiarly interesting or instructive to them, and gives at length Christ's reproof of the Pharisees and their self-righteousness ; while St. Luke as naturally omits all that relates to Jewish sects or customs, and sets forth rather what is applicable to all mankind, irrespective of race or country.

Taken as a whole, the resemblances in the two discourses are greater than their differences. They begin alike and end alike, and such passages as they have in common follow a like order. The differences between the two reports are a proof that the Holy Spirit permitted to the Evangelists an "inspired discretion" in their choice of matter, and that their aim was "not so much to confine our minds to one set of *words*, as if they were or could be a full exponent of Christ's meaning, as to declare what was in the *mind* of Christ." <sup>1</sup>

The reports of the two Evangelists in many respects supplement and explain each other.

St. Luke's account of our Lord's discourse commences with four beatitudes, counterbalanced by four woes. The corresponding beatitudes in St. Luke and St. Matthew are as follows :—

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wordsworth.



## St. Luke.

"Blessed be ye poor"  
(vi. 20).

"Blessed are ye that  
hunger now" (vi. 21).

"Blessed are ye when  
men shall hate you, and  
cast out your name as evil,  
for the Son of Man's sake"  
(vi. 22).

## St. Matthew.

"Blessed are the poor  
*in spirit*" (v. 3).

"Blessed are they that  
do hunger and thirst after  
righteousness" (v. 6).

"Blessed are ye when  
men shall revile you, and  
persecute you falsely, for  
My sake" (v. 11).

The following passages should be compared :—

*The law of love and the law of retaliation.*

Luke vi. 27-36 ; Matt. v. 38-48.

*Charity in judging of others.*

Luke vi. 37-42 ; Matt. vii. 1-5.

The words "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," are given only by St. Luke. Also the words about the folly of the blind leading the blind, and the impossibility of the disciple rising to a higher standard than his teacher.

## NOTES.

## A. On St. Luke iv. 29.

The ancient village of Nazareth stood, not on the summit of a hill, but in a hollow, a little below the top, and on the western slope of hill. Just above was the "brow of the hill," and a rocky cliff, with steep descents, any one of which would have answered the purpose of the excited and angry Nazarenes. Casting down a precipice was a punishment sometimes inflicted for offences against religion, such as sacrilege or blasphemy.



**B. On the Date of Luke v. 10.**

The call of St. Peter and his friends in this narrative is probably not the same as that in Matt. iv. 18, and Mark i. 16; but a later one. We have (1) The Conversion of Peter, Andrew, and John, related in St. John's Gospel (i. 35-42), which had taken place some months before; (2) Their first call to follow Christ, when they left their nets (Matt. iv. 18; Mark i. 16); (3) Their second call, when, having in the interval returned to their fishing, they now "forsook all and followed their Master (Luke v. 10); (4) The final call of Luke (vi. 13-16).

**C. On "The Second Sabbath after the First."**

The words are literally "the second-first sabbath." St. Luke gives this note of time without any word of explanation. The expression occurs nowhere else, and its meaning is exceedingly doubtful. The R.V., following some ancient MSS., cuts the difficulty by omitting the word altogether. Its very singularity, however, seems to witness for its genuineness. The right translation of the word is doubtless "the first after the second." St. Luke tells us that the disciples "rubbed the ears of corn in their hands." The corn must have been wheat, for no one rubs barley. The time, therefore, must have been when wheat was nearly ripe, but not yet cut. This would answer to the time of Pentecost, or the Feast "of the first-fruits of wheat harvest" (Exod. xxxiv. 22). Hence the expression may mean "the first sabbath after the second great feast," that of Pentecost.

**D. On the Healing of the Withered Hand.**

It is very interesting to compare the three accounts we have of this miracle. The opponents, according to St. Matthew, began by questioning our Lord: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?" To this, it would seem from St. Mark and St. Luke, that Jesus replied by asking another question: "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?" Then (St. Matt.) He illustrated His question by an appeal to their own practice, and answered their question directly—"it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." What wonder that St. Mark should add that "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts."



### E. On the Two Reports of the Sermon on the Mount.

Differences of time, audience, and place have been alleged against the identity of these discourses ; but they disappear upon a closer examination. The Evangelists, in relating events, do not always, as we have seen, group them together in the order in which they happened. The slightly different language in the enumeration of districts used by St. Matthew (iv. 25) and St. Luke (vi. 17) does not imply any real dissimilarity of audience ; but simply that the people came from all parts. Nor, from the two accounts, need any difference of locality be argued. St. Matthew tells us that our Lord "went up into a mountain" (v. 1), St. Luke that He stood "in the plain" (vi. 17), or, more correctly, "*on a level place ;*" which may very well mean a level place upon the side of a hill.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### The Galilean Ministry

*(Continued).*

THE CENTURION AND HIS SERVANT—THE WIDOW'S SON—CHRIST AND THE BAPTIST—THE WOMAN THAT WAS A SINNER—PARABLES—MIRACLES—CONFESSION OF ST. PETER—THE TRANSFIGURATION—THE DEMONIAK CHILD.

**H**EALING of the Centurion's Servant (vii. 1-10). From the Mount, Jesus Christ returned at once to Capernaum. Here, probably on the same day, an urgent request was made to Him to heal the servant or confidential slave<sup>1</sup> of a centurion, an officer, as we may suppose, of the Roman garrison stationed in the district. According to St. Matthew's account, the centurion urged his request in person. St. Luke, however, whose account is given in more detail, informs us that the favour was sought for through "the elders of the Jews."<sup>2</sup>

This centurion was not one in whom we should naturally have expected to see any true faith in Christ's

<sup>1</sup> Slaves were not unfrequently taken into their masters' confidence as private secretaries or as tutors to their children.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew (viii. 5) adopts in fact the common practice in historical narratives of speaking of a person doing himself what in reality he did through others.



work or person, or any regard for the Jewish people. A Roman and a soldier, he belonged to a people who despised the Jews. He was of the conquering race, and came as a master amongst the people of Capernaum. Yet he had won their love and gratitude. The Jewish elders pleading the cause of this stranger with the Lord, said "that he was worthy for whom He should do this, for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue," meaning, of course, at his own expense. He was, then, a proselyte<sup>1</sup> or convert to the Jewish religion, and as such had been admitted to some of the privileges of the chosen people. As a proselyte he would be familiar with the Jewish expectations and longings for the Messiah; while his humility and piety, which are evident throughout the narrative, would dispose him to put faith in our Lord as the Promised One. The kindliness of his disposition is also remarkable. He was in trouble, not for an only son or some near and dear relative, but for a slave, whose life he could have made bitter with hard service and cruel treatment.

The evidences of the centurion's faith and humility are remarkable. He shrank from going in person to Jesus Christ. So he, first of all, sent the elders of the Jews to prefer his request, and as soon as he heard that the Lord was on the way, he despatched some personal friends, bidding them express to Him his sense of his personal unworthiness of such a visit. "Lord, trouble not Thyself," was the message; "I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." The centurion had heard probably

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.



of the healing of the nobleman's son by a word of the Lord's,<sup>1</sup> and had learnt that sickness and death were as much under Christ's command as he himself was under the orders of his commanding officer, and had, too, soldiers under him from whom he expected implicit obedience.

Such wonderful faith excited the Lord's astonishment. The faith of this Gentile soldier was greater than any He had met with in the born Israelites. The centurion had indeed the two great elements of true faith, "trustfulness and humility," and these Jesus Christ will always recognize and acknowledge.

**The Raising of the Widow's Son** (vii. 11-17). The Evangelists have recorded three instances in which our Lord raised persons from the dead.<sup>2</sup> He may have raised others, but we cannot tell. It is plain, from the narratives, that each of the three caused a very great sensation. The raising of the widow's son is told us by St. Luke only. The time was the day after<sup>3</sup> the last miracle: the place an obscure little city called Nain,<sup>4</sup> situated on the northern slope of Little Hermon, and some twenty-five miles south of Capernaum. The Lord was accompanied by His disciples "and much people." As He and His company were approaching the city by the "narrow rocky path" up the hill, they were met by a sad funeral procession. The dead body of a youth, the only son of a widowed mother, was being carried on its bier of wood to burial. The place of sepulture

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 46-54.

<sup>2</sup> The raising of Jairus's daughter, recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke; of the widow's son, by St. Luke only; and of Lazarus, by St. John only.

<sup>3</sup> The R.V. adopts another reading: "Soon afterwards."

<sup>4</sup> Represented by the modern hamlet of Nein.



was, as always, outside the city, perhaps in one of those rock-hewn sepulchres which may still be seen in the neighbourhood. The Lord recognized the mother amid the crowd, and addressed to her two brief words of sympathy, the fulness and depth of which she was now to see. At the Lord's touch of the bier, the bearers stood still, and probably without a pause, and before the crowd had time to gather more closely around, the word of power was spoken, "Young man, to thee I say arise."<sup>1</sup> The graciousness of the act was completed by the Lord giving the young man back to his mother. What a day it must have been to her ! Nor can we wonder at the effect upon the people. They felt that God was once more in the midst of His people.

**The Question of the Baptist** (vii. 18-23). The fame of the Lord's miracles spread into Judæa, and reached even the Baptist in his prison. The news was conveyed to him by his disciples. It appears to have created an anxiety in St. John's mind, which he sought to allay by obtaining some direct assurance from the Lord Himself. For this purpose he sent two of his disciples with the message, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another ?"

It has been asked whether the Baptist sent this message for his own sake or for that of his disciples ? Did he find his own faith, tried by a cruel imprisonment, wavering, or did he, knowing his own time was short, desire, so to speak, to hand over his disciples to the Lord as their Master ? The former supposition is the more natural and the more likely. The Baptist might wonder why the worker of so great miracles

<sup>1</sup> The position of the pronoun in the original is emphatic. "Christ speaks to the young man as within hearing, for all live unto God."



should leave him to languish in the dungeon of Machaerus, and his faith, for a time at least, became overclouded.

The Lord's response confirms this. He bade the two disciples return to their master and tell him of all the works of mercy and of power of which they had been the witnesses. The Lord's hour had not come for any such declaration as the Baptist asked for, but the Baptist would feel that he had not sent his message in vain. Hold fast, it seemed to say to him : thou art not forgotten. There is a special blessing for thee, if thou keepest thy faith in Me.

Another explanation has been suggested. The Rabbis, in their dislike of a suffering and a conquering Messiah in one person, had interpreted their ancient prophecies of two Messiahs, one suffering, the other reigning in glory. St. John's message may imply that, though he had already confessed his belief in Jesus as the suffering Messiah, "the Lamb of God," he was in doubt whether or not to identify Him with the second, or "glorious" Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

**Christ's Testimony to the Baptist** (vii. 24-35). According to the Baptist the very highest place of honour in the long roll of the prophets, for he alone of them all had been able to point to the Messiah as come, yet our Lord assures us that the least member of His Church has greater privileges given to him than were given to the Baptist. The high testimony of our Lord to John was received with pleasure by the people. But the Pharisees and lawyers, who had come to hear John's teaching out of curiosity merely, and had never submitted to his baptism, re-

<sup>1</sup> Those who support this explanation would translate, "Art Thou the coming One, or do we look for a Second."



fused to receive it, rejecting God's purpose of salvation for themselves.<sup>1</sup> Of these last our Lord went on to speak when He likened their rejection of the Baptist and of Himself to the peevishness and perverseness of children refusing to be pleased, whatever game their companions might propose.

**The Anointing of the Lord's Feet** (vii. 36-50). This beautiful and touching narrative is preserved to us only by St. Luke. It is clearly not the same as the anointing at Bethany some nine months later. Our Lord had accepted an invitation to eat with him, given by one of the Pharisees. The motive which prompted the invitation was probably not of the worthiest. There was evidently an ungracious readiness to find fault, as well as a carelessness in regard to the usual duties of a host.

Whilst the feast was proceeding, there entered through the open doors of the Eastern house a woman, whose character for evil-living was notorious in the city. Gliding quietly, and for the moment probably unperceived, she made her way to where the Lord was reclining on the couch before the table, and anointed His bare feet with precious ointment. This poor depraved one thus showed her true repentance, for she was offering of that which had before ministered to her sinful life. Jesus seemed at first to take no notice, but He knew it all, the sad life of vice, the unutterable anguish and sorrow of heart, the real repentance, the true love.<sup>2</sup> The Lord's host, whose name was Simon, in his own mind condemned his Guest, either for lack of that discernment of spirits,

<sup>1</sup> On verse 30 see note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> On the tradition respecting this woman, see note C at the end of the chapter.



which is a gift of the true prophet, or, if He knew the woman's character, for accepting her homage. But He soon had proof that Jesus was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, for the Lord placed before him exactly what was passing in his own mind. This He did in the parable of the two debtors.<sup>1</sup> In this parable, "God is the creditor, the two debtors are sinners, and they are both forgiven." But the greater love to God is shown by the one who has the deepest sense of his own sin, and of the greatness of the forgiveness accorded to him. This is one of the lessons which our Lord intended to teach Simon. He did not mean to say that the more wicked and profligate a man's life may have been, the greater will be his love to God, if brought back to Him. But He did mean to say that he, whose *sense* of sin and its exceeding sinfulness is strongest, will rejoice most in a Redeemer, and will therefore love most.

And a second lesson lies in the words "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." Our Lord intends it to be understood, not that her love *caused* her forgiveness, but her gratitude *proved* it. Her forgiveness was due to that "trustful surrender of her whole self to Christ's influence, which Christ calls her faith. For the sake of it all her previous sin was forgiven. Her faith saved her. Without some measure of such self-surrender on our part, Christ is unable to do anything for our soul."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand her love, shown by her offering, was the result of her sense of forgiveness, and our Lord means

<sup>1</sup> We should notice how our Lord's comment upon His own parable, in verses 44-46, brings out the grudging nature of the entertainment which had been offered to Him. We may also note that these verses have the character of Hebrew poetry.

<sup>2</sup> Archdeacon Norris.



to tell Simon that he ought to have so understood the woman's act.

**Women minister unto Christ** (viii. 1-3). The next few weeks were occupied by our Lord in a preaching tour in Galilee. During this tour, many women, three of whom are mentioned, accompanied Jesus Christ, and "ministered unto Him of their substance." This interesting and instructive notice is given us only by St. Luke. It shows us how they were attracted to Him, whose teaching, they seem to have instinctively felt, would in the end raise them from the degraded and oppressed condition, which their sex occupied more or less throughout the East, to their rightful place of true dignity beside men.

The incident also suggests to us one of the sources from which St. Luke gathered materials for his Gospel History, and gives us a glimpse also of the manner in which Jesus, Who had not where to lay His head, and Who was too poor to pay the Temple Tax, was, with His disciples, supported during His ministry on earth.

The three women mentioned by name were probably all of them instances of the Lord's power and mercy. Mary of Magdala was evidently so. Her case had been one of peculiarly severe demoniacal possession. Of the other two we do not read elsewhere. But the mention of Joanna shows how the Lord's teaching had made its way into the highest social quarters.

**The Parable of the Sower** (viii. 4-15). It was at this time that Christ began to teach by parables. Of the first group of parables,<sup>1</sup> St. Luke has preserved for us one only, that of the sower. The chief points of difference to be noted between St. Luke's account of this parable and those of St. Matthew and St. Mark

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xiii.



are as follows :—To St. Luke alone are due the notices that the seed falling on the pathway “was trodden down,” that the seed on the rock withered away, “because it lacked moisture,” and that the thorns sprang up *with* the seed which fell among them.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke omits the scorching effect of the sun’s rays upon the seed on the shallow rocky soil, and whilst the other Evangelists mention various degrees of fruitfulness, St. Luke only mentions the highest.

**Proverbial Sayings** (viii. 16–18). These are mentioned by St. Mark in the same connection as by St. Luke ; by St. Matthew they are mentioned in wholly different connections. It may well have been that our Lord repeated these short pithy sayings on more than one occasion. The proverb about the candle or lamp, for instance, was apparently repeated on three distinct occasions, once in the Sermon on the Mount, in the present passage, and later on in this same Gospel, in chap. xi. 33.

The two proverbs teach the same lesson : the duty of taking heed, first, how we hear, that the seed of the Word may fall into good soil, and second, that having received the light of the Word, we must be careful to let its blessed light be seen by others. For this purpose the light has been given.<sup>2</sup>

**Christ's Mother and His Brethren** (viii. 19–21). The three first Evangelists all speak of the visit of the mother of Jesus and His brethren, but St. Luke places it differently, and without any men-

<sup>1</sup> We may notice the differences here : St. Matthew (xiii. 7) says, “upon the thorns,” St. Mark (iv. 7) “among the thorns,” St. Luke “amidst” (or, in the midst of) “the thorns.” These differences are brought out in R.V.

<sup>2</sup> The comment, “that which he thinketh he hath” (ver. 18. R.V.), is, in its fulness, peculiar to St. Luke.



tion of the time at which it occurred.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, however, that our Lord would not allow any human relationship to interfere with His Father's work.

**The Storm on the Lake** (viii. 22-25). St. Luke, in his account of this incident, uses a stronger word to describe our Lord's sleep [than the other Evangelists: "*he fell into deep sleep*," wearied and exhausted by a day of incessant toil.

**The Gadarene Demoniac** (viii. 26-39). The morning found our Lord and His Apostles on the south-eastern shore of the lake, in the country of the Gadarenes.<sup>2</sup> Here He was met by a demoniac,<sup>3</sup> whose whole nature had been shipwrecked, and completely demoralized. St. Luke records the healing of this man. In his account, we should notice the request of the demons or devils that "He would not command them to go out into the deep."<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew omits this request altogether, while St. Mark says that "they besought Him not to send them away out of the country." The Jews had the notion that if either good or evil spirits passed the boundaries of the countries to which they were assigned, there was no place for them except the deep, or abyss. To have sent the demons there would have been to consign them to torment before the time.

We should observe, too, that Christ did not *send* the

<sup>1</sup> The words, "My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it," seem coloured by ver. 15, and to suggest St. Luke's order as the right one for this incident.

<sup>2</sup> The proper name appears to have been "Gerasene." See p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew speaks of two.

<sup>4</sup> The word for "deep" occurs in Rev. ix. 1, xx. 3, where it is translated "the bottomless pit" in A.V., but is left untranslated, "abyss" in R.V. It means there "the under-world, in which evil spirits are confined."



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey



demons into the swine, but permitted them to go. The moral effect upon the spectators was very great. If such was the effect of the demons entering the swine, what must have been the moral condition of the poor sufferer.

**Healing of the Woman with an Issue of Blood** (viii. 43-48). The Gadarenes, or Gerasenes, desired Jesus to leave their country. He did so. The blessings of the Gospel, which might have been theirs, were withdrawn from them. Christ returned to Galilee, and appears to have been at once called upon to heal the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. On his way to the house, He was touched with the touch of faith by a woman suffering from an apparently incurable disease, and the sufferer was at once healed. St. Mark's account is given in more detail, but it is to St. Luke we owe the mention of St. Peter as the spokesman here, as always, of his brethren.

**Raising of Jairus's Daughter** (viii. 41, 42, 49-56). During the delay occasioned by the woman, messengers had been despatched to Jairus to say that he needed not to trouble Jesus, as his little girl was already dead. But our Lord encouraged the father, bidding him not to fear. The child, as we know, was restored to her sorrowing parents. St. Luke makes one important addition to the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark. He says that when Christ said the maid was not dead, but sleeping, the mourners laughed Him to scorn, "*Knowing that she was dead.*" It is plain, then, that the child was really dead. But to the Lord of life and of death, death is but a passage, a night, so to speak, between two days, and therefore He speaks of death merely as a sleep from



which He can recall His servants, at any moment, if He so wills it.<sup>1</sup>

**The Mission of the Twelve** (ix. 1-6). St. Luke in his account of our Lord's charge to His Apostles on this occasion agrees closely with St. Mark. We need only observe that they were to go forth in faith, depending upon the care of their heavenly Father for them. St. Luke alone uses the phrase, in describing their work, "preaching the Gospel," by which, of course, we are to understand the glad tidings that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

**Herod's Perplexity** (ix. 7-9). The mission of the Twelve had the effect of spreading the fame of their Master. The report reached Herod Antipas ; and he was much alarmed. The idea that the slaughtered Baptist had risen again suggested itself to him, but does not appear to have satisfied him.<sup>2</sup> He desired, as St. Luke alone tells us, to see Jesus, a desire which was gratified, as again we learn only from St. Luke, a year or so afterwards, on Good Friday.

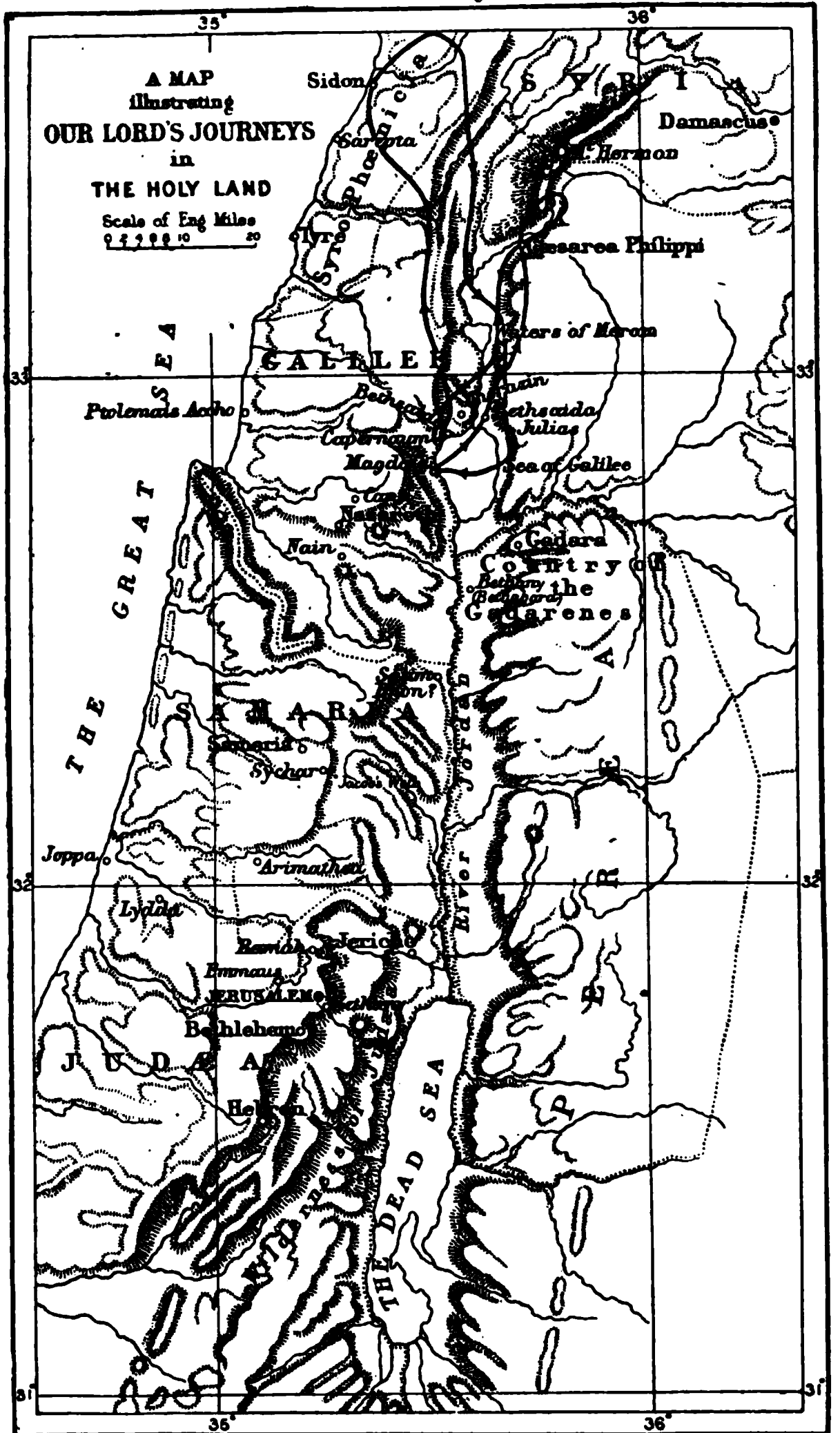
**The Five Thousand fed** (ix. 10-17). Upon the return of the Twelve from their short mission, Jesus retired with them to the neighbourhood of Bethsaida Julias, a city at the north-east corner of the Sea of Galilee, east of the Jordan, and apparently quite a distinct place from the Bethsaida near Capernaum. It had been enlarged and beautified by Herod Philip. From St. Luke's account of the feeding of the five thousand, we learn that the Lord not only directed the people to sit down, but Himself gave the order that it was to be "by fifties in a company," a method of

<sup>1</sup> We may compare John xi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See ver. 9. The only allusion which St. Luke makes to the Baptist's death is the incidental one in this passage.



# 4<sup>th</sup> Journey





arrangement which would make the reckoning of the numbers easy.<sup>1</sup>

**The Confession of St. Peter: Christ's First Announcement of His Death and Resurrection** (ix. 18-22). The feeding of the five thousand took place, as we learn from St. John,<sup>2</sup> shortly before the Passover, and a year therefore before our Lord's crucifixion. The next event recorded by St. Luke is St. Peter's celebrated confession, which drew forth from Jesus Christ such a word of blessing and promise upon the Apostle.<sup>3</sup> Between these two events there was an interval of four or five months. Regarding that interval St. Luke is wholly silent.<sup>4</sup>

**The Conditions of Discipleship** (ix. 23-27). The short discourse on self-denial, as being the test to which every disciple of Christ must be put, was perhaps occasioned by the rebuke of our Lord by St. Peter. That rebuke, and the reproof it called forth, are omitted by St. Luke, but appear in close connection with this lesson on self-denial in St. Matthew and St. Mark. The lesson itself teaches us that there is a looking on into the future in respect of everything we do here. "The man who sacrifices his life or soul <sup>5</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> For further remarks on this miracle see chapters vii. and xvii. The ruins of Bethsaida Julias are probably still existing at Telui (corrupted from Tel Julias, *i.e.* the Heap, or Ruin of Julias). Close by is a green plain, exactly suiting the requirements of the miracle.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The blessing and promise are recorded only by St. Matthew.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke omits the dismissal of the multitude; the storm on the lake; the discourse on the true bread in the synagogue at Capernaum; the journey into Phœnicia; the healing of the Syrophenician girl; the feeding of the four thousand; the return to Galilee; and the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida Julias on the second journey northwards. It was during that journey, near Cæsarea Philippi, that St. Peter's confession was made. See further, chapters viii., xvii., and xviii.

<sup>5</sup> The same Greek word is used here for *life* and for *soul*.



*this* world for the Gospel's sake shall gain it in the *next*."

**The Transfiguration** (ix. 28-36). In the accounts of this wonderful incident, St. Luke's alone tells us that Jesus was *praying* at the moment of transfiguration. Other particulars which we gather only from St. Luke are : (1) That the subject of the discourse of Moses and Elijah with Jesus Christ was "His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem ;" (2) The drowsiness of the three Apostles, and their apparently successful resistance of it ; (3) The fear of the Apostles as they entered into the cloud.

We may note, too, that though St. Luke omits the injunction to the three to keep silence respecting the sight they had witnessed until after the resurrection, he does tell us that they kept the matter "close."<sup>1</sup>

**Healing of the Demoniac Child** (ix. 37-42). Omitting the conversation between Jesus and the Three on the return from the Mount of Transfiguration, St. Luke passes on at once to the account of the demoniac child ; which is also given by St. Matthew and St. Mark. St. Luke's account is much condensed. The only detail we owe to him is that the boy was an "only child." Of the conversation between the father and our Lord, and of the subsequent question of the Apostles and our Lord's reply, he says nothing.

**Second Announcement of the Passion** (ix. 43-45). An interval of some days or weeks separates these verses from the preceding. The Lord was now on a tour through Galilee,<sup>2</sup> and probably found it necessary, by this second prophecy, to check any attempt to "make him a king." St. Luke, it may be, would have us connect the high, though erroneous,

<sup>1</sup> See note D at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 30-32.



expectation, indulged in by His disciples, with their wonder at the healing of the boy, which they had been unable to accomplish.

**Lesson in Humility** (ix. 46-48). This was given at Capernaum.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke's account is very short and abbreviated.<sup>2</sup>

**Lesson in Toleration** (ix. 49, 50). In the previous incident our Lord had spoken of doing things in His name. This reminds St. John of an occurrence which had lately happened. They had seen a man casting out devils in Christ's name. They had forbidden him. Some doubt probably, caused by their Master's word, had arisen in John's mind, as to whether they had been right. He appeals to Jesus. The Lord's answer confirms their suspicion of their error. They ought not to have forbidden him. Though the man would not follow them, he was not really an opponent, for he was acting in the Lord's name, even as they would have done, and he was acting, as we must believe, sincerely.<sup>3</sup>

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### NOTES.

#### A. Proselytes.

The later Jewish Rabbis appear to have divided the proselytes, or converts from heathenism to the Jewish faith, into two classes :—

(a) *Proselytes of the Gate*; who had become worshippers of the true God, but had not accepted the whole of the Jewish law or ritual. They were not, therefore, admitted to the full

<sup>1</sup> Mark ix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See further, chapters viii. and xviii.

<sup>3</sup> We should note the important difference in reading adopted by the R.V.; "he that is not against you" ("us," A.V.) "is for you" ("us," A.V.).



spiritual privileges of the Israelites. The term "*of the Gate*" was applied to them either in allusion to Exod. xx. 10, or because they were not allowed to come beyond the door of the Temple. The centurions of Luke vii. 2-10 and Acts x. 1, 2, and the "devout persons" of Acts xvii. 4, are supposed to have belonged to this class.

(b) *Proselytes of Righteousness*; who had accepted all the Jewish faith and ritual, and who were consequently admitted to full communion. Their initiation appears to have consisted of *three rites—circumcision, baptism, and a free-will sacrifice*. The second, however, was perhaps not practised until after the Christians had set the example.

### B. On Luke vii. 30.

This verse has some difficulty. The A.V. means that these men rejected the purpose of God, against their own interest. The R.V. reads "rejected for themselves the counsel of God," implying, as it would seem, that, whilst they thought it all very good for the common people, as for themselves, they were above learning or receiving anything from John. The meaning really seems to be that God's will was that they should be saved, but that they rejected it. Cf. Acts xx. 27; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

### C. On the Name of the Woman in Luke vii. 37.

The A.V., in the heading to this chapter, adopts the ancient tradition that the woman was Mary Magdalene. There is nothing, however, to support this assumption. It is unknown to the Greek Fathers, and the earlier Latin Fathers regard it as doubtful. At the same time, the place of the occurrence may have been Magdala: there is nothing against such a supposition—and in that case, the woman may well have been the Magdalene, whose tears and sorrow have been so often beautifully treated in Christian art. Luke viii. 2, so far as it goes, may be understood as supporting the tradition.

### D. On the Transfiguration.

The word rendered *decease* in ver. 31 (*departure*, R.V., margin), embraces the thought both of our Lord's death and His ascension into heaven. Cf. ver. 51.



The words "when they were awake" may be rendered "when they were fully awake" (R.V.), or "having remained awake" (R.V. margin), or, "when they were waking up." Any of these would more or less imply that the three had not entirely given way to sleep.

In ver. 33, St. Luke says of St. Peter that he did not know what he said. We must remember that the Apostles were "in the Spirit," or "in ecstasy." Only so, could they have recognized Moses and Elijah. Cf. Acts x. 10, xi. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 3; Rev. i. 10. It is remarkable, as showing the deep impression the whole scene made upon St. Peter's mind, that he uses the same words "tabernacle" and "decease" in speaking of his own approaching death, years after (2 Pet. i. 14, 15).



## *CHAPTER XXXI.*

### **The Journey towards Jerusalem.**

**GALILEE LEFT—MINISTRY IN PERÆA—THE THREE  
ASPIRANTS—THE LAWYER'S QUESTION—THE GOOD  
SAMARITAN—MARTHA AND MARY.**

**T**HE point at which we have now arrived in St. Luke's narrative marks the close of our Lord's Galilean ministry. The same point is marked also by St. Matthew and St. Mark ;<sup>1</sup> but they pass on at once to the history of the Passion week. They omit all mention of the preceding six or seven months. St. John gives us some of the leading facts of that interval, and to it, we may, with much probability, ascribe those eight or nine chapters of St. Luke's Gospel, which extend from chapters ix. 51 to xviii. 14.

Some, indeed, have supposed that St. Luke has in these chapters intercalated a collection of anecdotes and discourses, for which he could find no room in the orderly narrative, and which he desired to place on record before going on to the history of the Passion and Resurrection.

There seems, however, good reason to believe that St. Luke, in this important section of his Gospel, is adhering to his promise of relating the story of the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. ; Mark x. 1.



Lord's life and ministry in the order in which the events occurred. In trying to trace this order, we are helped by St. John.

According to St. Luke, our Lord leaving Galilee,<sup>1</sup> traversed, or skirted Samaria, and after an interval arrived at Bethany.<sup>2</sup> This will correspond with the visit to Jerusalem, to which Bethany was so near, at the Feast of the Dedication in the December before the Passion, and which is mentioned by St. John.<sup>3</sup>

During this visit, our Lord's teaching aroused the active hostility of His enemies, to avoid the consequences of which He retired "beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized."<sup>4</sup> The locality would call to the minds of the Apostles the ministry of the Baptist, and thus a very natural occasion is given for the request, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."<sup>5</sup> To this ministry in Peræa, beyond Jordan, may therefore be assigned the discourses in St. Luke xi.-xiii. They would naturally draw to the Lord the "many" of whom St. John speaks.<sup>6</sup>

After a time, Jesus was recalled to Bethany by the death of Lazarus.<sup>7</sup> But He stayed two days where He was after receiving the summons to go to His sick friend. On the third day He went. Now St. Luke tells us that a threat from the Pharisees reached our Lord in His Peræan retreat, which as we remember was in the dominions of Herod Antipas. In this case, Jesus stayed two days, and on the third departed, and then evidently to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> The coincidence of these two journeys may, not improbably, be assumed.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Luke x. 38.

<sup>3</sup> John x. 22.

<sup>4</sup> John x. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xi. 1.

<sup>6</sup> John x. 41, 42.

<sup>7</sup> John xi. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Luke xiii. 31, 33.



The raising of Lazarus necessitated Christ's departure once more from Jerusalem. This time He went to a city called Ephraim, some sixteen miles north-east of the capital. How He travelled from this place to the other side of Jordan, in preparation for His last journey, through Jericho, up to Jerusalem, St. John does not tell us. We have the key, apparently, in St. Luke,<sup>1</sup> who tells us that "as He went to Jerusalem, He passed through Samaria and Galilee." This notice of Samaria before Galilee in a journey *towards* Jerusalem could not be explained, except on this supposition, that when He left Ephraim, Jesus journeyed northwards through Samaria and Galilee as far as the fords of the Jordan lying a few miles south of the Sea of Galilee; that He there crossed the river, and joining the caravan of Galilean pilgrims made His way through Peræa to Jericho and the Holy City. Towards the close of this journey, the three earlier narratives fall together again.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the teaching of these eight or nine chapters appears in St. Matthew's Gospel in connection with earlier events, and with the Galilean ministry. But throughout these journeyings our Lord would have an almost entirely new audience, and He may have repeated again much of the instruction which He had already given in Galilee.

**The Samaritan Village** (ix. 51-56). A crisis in our Lord's ministry had arrived, and St. Luke marks it by the significant words, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." We cannot help connecting these words with the conversation between Jesus and Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. This

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvii. 11;

<sup>2</sup> Viz: at Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15.



journey to Jerusalem was to be fraught not only with difficulties and dangers, but its goal was to be the cross, the grave, and then the Resurrection. The time for these things had "well-nigh come,"<sup>1</sup> and therefore in all the remaining months, the Lord kept the end steadily in view.

Although Jesus did not, on this occasion, travel with a caravan of Galilean pilgrims,<sup>2</sup> He was accompanied by a large number of followers,<sup>3</sup> beside the Twelve. This necessitated the forwarding of messengers in advance to make preparation for the Lord's arrival.

The first stage on the journey was a Samaritan village, the inhabitants of which, on learning that His destination was Jerusalem, would not receive Him. All their national jealousy and hatred of the Jews was aroused, and they rejected Him.

James and John, full of hopes, we may suppose, that their Lord was about to reign over His people, and restore the kingdom to them, were for calling down immediate vengeance upon all who refused to acknowledge Him. But Jesus rebuked them for showing a temper so contrary to that spirit of love which should govern the subjects of His new and heavenly kingdom.

**The Three Aspirants** (ix. 57-62). The travellers turned aside to find more hospitable quarters, in some other village. On the way, some one, moved no doubt by the sight of the Lord and His sympathizing followers, proposed to follow Him, wherever

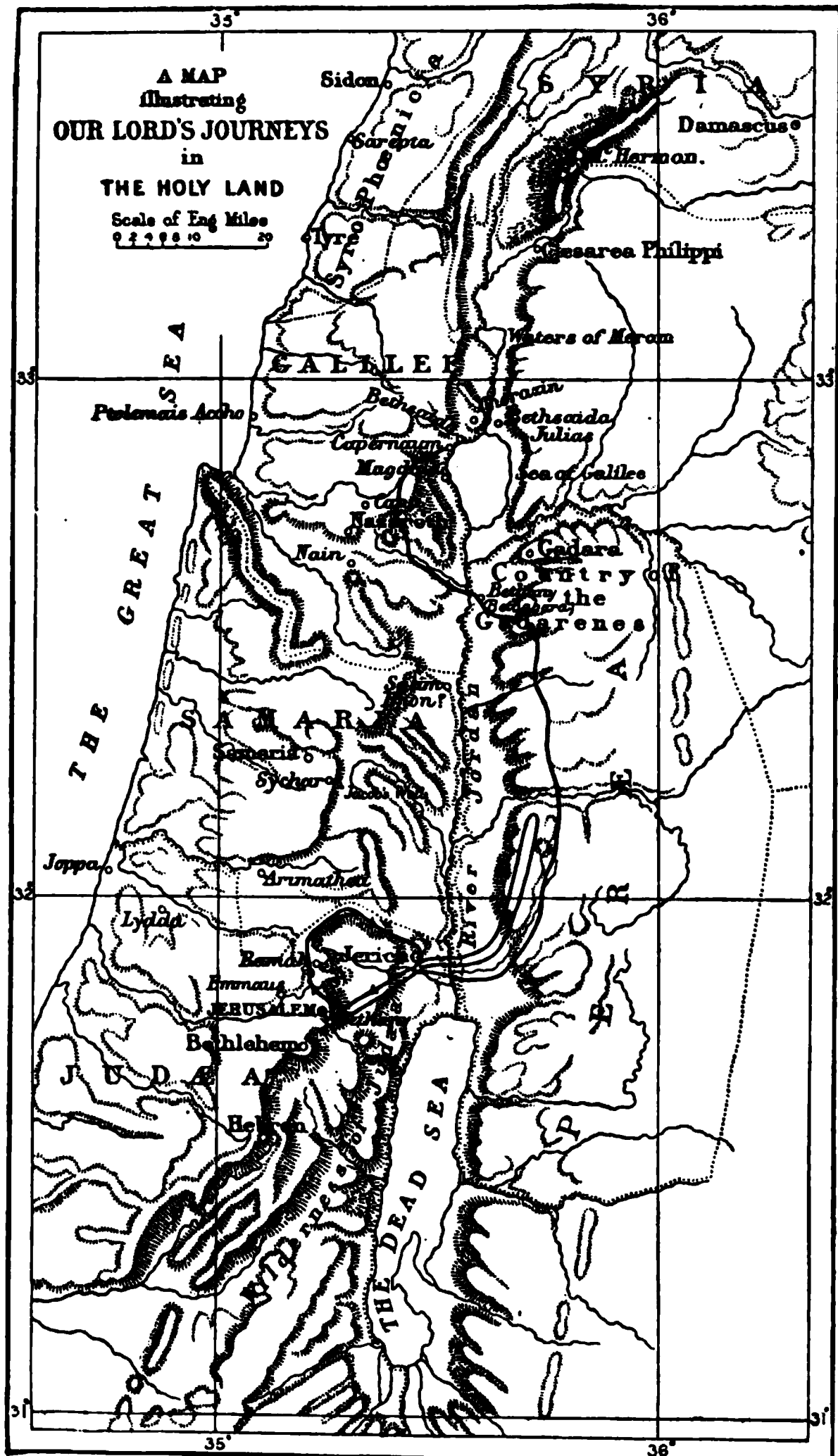
<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 51. R.V.

<sup>2</sup> These caravans always avoided the Samaritan villages.

<sup>3</sup> Of whom seventy were sent on a preaching tour. A large number of women, St. Matthew tells us (xxvii. 55), followed the Lord from Galilee.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Journey





He went. The answer of Jesus was designed to test the man : "The Son of Man had not where to lay His head." Whether the would-be follower stood the test, or not, we cannot tell. But there is something very mournful in our Lord's words, according well with the circumstances of His present journey : Galilee left, Samaria inhospitable, nothing but suffering in front.

Another, whom from St. Matthew <sup>1</sup> we know to have been a disciple, had perhaps asked leave of absence for urgent family duties. The only answer was "Follow Me." The request being still urged, the answer of the Lord is decisive and imperative : "Let the dead bury their dead : but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." The latter clause is peculiar to St. Luke. The man had received a call to higher duties ; the lower ones must be left to those who had not received such a call.<sup>2</sup>

A third aspirant then came forward. He, too, would follow the Lord, but, like Elisha,<sup>3</sup> desired first to bid his friends farewell.<sup>4</sup> But a permission which might be accorded by Elijah could not be given by Christ. To Him the self-devotion must be entire. There must be no second thoughts. The kingdom of Heaven requires a single eye.

**Mission of the Seventy** (x. 1-24). Giving up His intention of going through Samaria, our Lord now took quite another road, along the frontier of

<sup>1</sup> Matthew relates this and the preceding out of order, evidently (Matt. viii. 19-22).

<sup>2</sup> That in any conflict of duties the lower must give place to the higher, had already been taught in the Law of Moses. See Lev. xxi. 10-12 ; Numb. vi. 6, 7, xix. 11-14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xix. 20.

<sup>4</sup> This third offer is peculiar to St. Luke. A suggestion has been made that these three men were Judas Iscariot, Thomas, and Matthew. —ARCHBISHOP TRENCH, *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 166.



Galilee and Samaria towards the Jordan, which He crossed into Peræa or the country beyond the Jordan.<sup>1</sup>

Here He commissioned seventy of His followers "to go before His face," wherever He intended Himself to come. This mission is recorded only by St. Luke. They were to go "two and two," and although their mission, unlike that of the Twelve, was only a temporary one, the Lord gave them, as He had done to the Twelve, a strict charge.<sup>2</sup> One direction, peculiar to this charge, should be noticed. They were "to salute no man by the way." The time for their work was short, and they must not waste it on the lengthened greetings so common in the East. On the other hand, they were to be the messengers of peace to every house into which they entered.<sup>3</sup>

Christ concluded His charge by a solemn and affecting leave-taking of those cities of Galilee, which up till now had been the centre of His ministrations, and which had hardened themselves against His message.

For how long the Mission of the Seventy lasted, we cannot tell.<sup>4</sup> At any rate it was most successful.

In reply to their joyous report, the Lord tells them that, during their absence, He had been watching or seeing Satan falling from heaven. In spirit, He had seen, foreshortened as it were into one vision, the gradual "fall of the kingdom of darkness, typified by the fall of its head."<sup>5</sup> In the accomplishing of this

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Another of the directions of the charge was "Eat such things as are set before you." With St. Luke's mention of this it is interesting to compare the rule of his master, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 27.

<sup>4</sup> It has been variously estimated at "a few days" to "perhaps two months."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John xii. 31; Rev. xii. 9.



fall they, too, should have their work to do, "over all the power of the enemy." But this was not to be their chief joy. To be His servants, to have their names written in heaven, was far better.

Yet the occasion was one of exultant joy to Him, Who was otherwise the "Man of Sorrows." He foresaw the destruction of Satan's kingdom accomplished through the agency of "unlearned and ignorant men," "babes" as the world might call them; and for this the Divine Saviour rejoiced, and thanked His heavenly Father.<sup>1</sup> And He added a word to impress upon His disciples the blessedness of which they, through their faith in Him, had become partakers. In being with Him, they had indeed been with the Light of the World, and by that Light, they had seen things which prophets such as Abraham and Jacob, and kings such as David, had longed to see, and had not seen.

**The Question of the Lawyer, and the Parable of the Good Samaritan** (x. 25-37). It is probable, from the incident with which this chapter closes,<sup>2</sup> that the Jordan had been again crossed, at the fords near Jericho, and that our Lord and His followers were nearing the end of their journey. This would give special interest to the parable of the good Samaritan. It may, indeed, in some of its details, have received illustration from sights the lawyer had seen on the road. Something, no doubt, in the Lord's teaching, gave rise to the lawyer's question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>3</sup> Christ referred him back to his Bible for an answer. But the lawyer was not con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xvi. 17, xviii. 3, 4; Rom. i. 22; and especially 1 Cor. i. 21, 26; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. St. Matthew's account is again out of chronological order.

<sup>2</sup> See verses 38-42.

<sup>3</sup> The Lord was probably resting in some house by the way, an "inn," perhaps, and hence the note that the lawyer "stood up."



tent, and pressed our Lord with a further question, "I know my duty to my neighbour,—but *who is my neighbour?*" To this inquiry Christ replied by the parable of the good Samaritan,<sup>1</sup> by which He intended to correct the narrow views of His questioner and of the Jewish Rabbis on this matter, and to rebuke, at the same time, the feeling of hatred with which the Jews and the Samaritans regarded each other.

And so our Saviour clearly taught us all that our help to those in distress is not to be limited to those whom we may suppose have a claim upon us, but that, like the compassion of Him Who died for all men, it is to be extended, as far as our ability goes, to every one who needs it.

But this parable has been supposed to have a yet deeper and more spiritual meaning, and to shadow forth the love of Christ to the whole human race. We had fallen into the hands of that Wicked One who is both a robber and a murderer. The law could not save us. Sacrifices could not take away sin.<sup>2</sup> "Patriarch and prophet and priest passed us by, helpless both in will and deed, for they themselves also lay wounded in that wounded man. Only that true Samaritan, beholding, was moved with compassion, as He is all compassion, and poured oil into the wounds, that is Himself into the hearts, purifying all hearts by faith."<sup>3</sup>

**Martha and Mary** (x. 38-42). Bearing in mind that St. Luke is writing, as he promised, in order of time, we may suppose the Mount of Olives to have been now reached, and our Lord a guest, on one of the evenings in the week of the Feast of Dedication,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Trench. Cf. Rom. viii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. x. 1, 4.

<sup>4</sup> John x. 22.



in the hospitable home of the two sisters, Martha and Mary, at Bethany, of which we shall hear more in the Gospel of St. John.<sup>1</sup> They both loved "The Master," and were anxious to serve Him. But Martha was "practical, anxious, and demonstrative; Mary, gentle, retiring, quiet and contemplative." Martha was grieved at her sister's inactivity, and at last broke out into a peevish complaint to Jesus. His gentle reproof told her that after all there were higher things and duties than even those important domestic ones about which she was so distracted.<sup>2</sup>

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*NOTES.*

**A. On the Mission of the Seventy.**

As the choice of Twelve Apostles clearly had reference to the Twelve Tribes (Matt. xix. 28), so the choice of these Seventy may have been dictated by the Seventy Elders of the Jewish council. Hence some have seen in the appointment of the Twelve, the institution of the Episcopate, and in that of the Seventy, of the Presbyterate. The institution of the Diaconate followed later on. See Acts vi.

**B. On the Parable of the Good Samaritan.**

The traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho in the time of our Lord, leaving Jerusalem by its eastern gate and crossing the Mount of Olives, would, on passing Bethany, be in the direct road to Jericho. Here he began a long descent of three thousand feet over bare limestone hills, and through a wild, desolate and desert country, until, after a journey of six hours' duration, he came in sight of the rich valley in which stood what was then one of the most important cities of Palestine

<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps Martha was the real hostess, Mary only finding a home in her sister's house. It has been conjectured that Martha was the widow of Simon the leper.

<sup>2</sup> As the word for "cumbered" is rightly rendered in R.V.



—Jericho, the stately city of palms. The robbers, whose deeds of blood made this part of the country the dread of the wayfarer, came down from the caves of the overhanging mountains which harboured them, and lurking behind the rocks of the rugged way, seized the traveller, plundered him, and left him naked and wounded to die of want and exposure. This illustrates our Lord's description of the plight of the traveller in the parable.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### The Ministry in Peræa.

THE LORD'S PRAYER—THE TRULY BLESSED—WARNINGS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS—THE RICH FOOL—TRUSTFULNESS AND WATCHFULNESS—GOD'S JUDGMENTS—THE SUFFERING WOMAN—THE WAY TO JERUSALEM—THE STRAIT GATE.

**THE Lord's Prayer** (xi. 1-4). St. John tells us that in consequence of the opposition excited by His teaching at the Feast of Dedication, Jesus retired from Jerusalem, and "went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized."<sup>1</sup> To this retirement, probably, we must refer the chapters xi.-xiii. 30 of St. Luke's Gospel.

The locality, coupled with seeing the Lord occupied in prayer, may well have suggested the request, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Jesus had already given this prayer to His disciples, in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>2</sup> That He should have repeated it again, on this occasion, seems to add, if possible, to its power and completeness as *the prayer* of the Christian Church. The two editions of the

<sup>1</sup> John x. 40. The place was Bethany in Peræa (John i. 28, R.V.).

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vi. 9-15.



prayer, if so we may speak, agree entirely in sense, and the verbal differences are slight.

The "Give us this day" of St. Matthew, is in St. Luke "Give us day by day."

In St. Matthew we read "As we forgive," whilst in St. Luke it is "For we also forgive."

The meaning, however, is the same. Our prayer for forgiveness must always be accompanied by an act of forgiveness on our part. We do not pray "forgive us our sins as we are wont to forgive," but "as we hereby forgive"—while on our knees. Even supposing our Lord's words to have been the same on the two occasions, just such variations would be found in two independent reports of them ; and some difference in the choice of words would occur when the Evangelists translated the prayer into Greek from the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic language, in which, probably, our Lord spoke.

**The Lesson on Prayer enforced** (xi. 5-13). The parable of the friend at midnight with which Jesus Christ went on to enforce the lesson He had just given, is peculiar to St. Luke. It teaches the duty of *perseverance* in prayer. If selfish people will grant a petition because of our importunity, how much more, out of His love to His children, will our Father in heaven attend to our requests. And when, for the trial of our faith, He delays His answer, we must pray with the more urgency. We are to ask, to seek, to knock, until the moment of answer comes. Nor are we to be disappointed if, when it comes, it may not be what we asked for. Our earthly parents will only give to their children what they believe to be good for them. Much more will our heavenly Father, in answer to our prayers, give us what is really good for us. In temporal matters



especially our requests may often be wrong, but in spiritual matters there is no doubt of one thing—our Father will give us the Holy Spirit if we ask Him.

**The Blasphemy of the Pharisees** (xi. 14–26). The healing of a dumb man, whose dumbness was occasioned by his being possessed by a devil, gave occasion to the blasphemous charge of the Pharisees, that Jesus cast out devils by the agency of Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.<sup>1</sup> They meant that not only this miracle, but that all His miracles had the same origin—that the Spirit of God in Him was the Spirit of the Wicked One.

**The Exclamation of the Woman** (xi. 27, 28). This is peculiar to St. Luke. “How many women,” says St. Chrysostom, “have blessed the Holy Virgin, and desired to be such a mother as she was ! What hinders them ? Christ has made for us a wide way to this happiness, and not only women, but men may tread it—the way of obedience ; this it is which makes such a mother.”<sup>2</sup>

**Seekers after a Sign answered** (xi. 29–36). This passage occurs in St. Matthew's Gospel, partly in a similar connection to the present, and partly in the Sermon on the Mount. Verse 33 occurs in St. Luke,

<sup>1</sup> The effect of possession, to cause dumbness and other physical evils, seems to have been by no means rare. St. Matthew (ix. 32 and xii. 22) records two such instances ; and on each occasion, the same blasphemous charge, as here, was made. The answers of our Lord in Matthew xii. 25–37, and Luke xi. 17–26, are nearly identical. He may well have replied twice in the same way. The records do not seem to be those of the same miracle. See note at end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Many see in the arrival of our Lord's mother and brethren, as recorded in Matt. xii. 46, as compared with this woman's exclamation, an undesigned coincidence. But if we are right in assigning these chapters to a ministry in Peræa, then the two cannot thus be connected together. For evidently that arrival of Mary on the scene was in Galilee. Cf. Mark iii. 31.



as in St. Mark, in connection with the Parable of the Sower. It would, therefore, appear to be a proverbial saying often used by our Lord, and with different applications. In the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples were to be lights, and they were to let their light shine. Here, on the contrary, the light, of which Jonah's incarceration within, and deliverance from, the fish was a type, was to the Risen Lord, the Resurrection. That would appeal to all as a sign that He had come down from heaven, and yet not to all, not to those whose light was, in truth, only darkness. They who saw the Prince of the Devils working in the miracles of Jesus, would not accept the sign when given. They were not persuaded, though One did rise from the dead.

**The Pharisees Denounced** (xi. 37-54). Whether the Pharisee who invited our Lord to eat at his house did so from real hospitality, or to satisfy his curiosity by seeing more of the famous Galilean Teacher, so mighty in word and deed, or whether it was done in guile to further the plots of his party, we have no certain means of ascertaining ; but that he was moved by no very friendly spirit seems probable from his suspicious observance of his guest, and his marked displeasure when our Lord omitted one of those outward ceremonies which the Pharisees observed so scrupulously, to the utter neglect of real piety of heart and life.

Jesus made it the occasion for denouncing, not so much this particular Pharisee, as the principles of his sect.<sup>1</sup> The result was an open rupture between Christ

<sup>1</sup> We find the same "woes" ascribed by St. Matthew (xxiii.) to the Holy Week. Not improbably Jesus Christ repeated them on more than one occasion.

The expression, "the Wisdom of God," in verse 49 represents rather



and His opponents. They laid wait for Him, "seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him."

**Warning against Hypocrisy, and Encouragement to Boldness** (xii. 1-12). The fierce assault of the Pharisee party recorded in the last chapter had the effect of attracting to our Lord so great a multitude of people, "that they trode one upon another." The discourse which followed was evidently founded on the previous incident ; but it was addressed to the disciples, not to the multitude. The former doubtless gathered close round their Master, and His words probably travelled but little beyond them. To have spoken to the crowd directly would have been, in all likelihood, to increase the tumult, a result not at that time desirable. The Lord's words were intended both as a warning and an encouragement—a warning against playing a part in religion, and an encouragement to speak out boldly, as He had done, against vice and imposture. Again, He reminds them that they may depend upon the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

**Parable of the Rich Fool: a Warning against Covetousness** (xii. 13-21). One of the crowd, overhearing the Lord's words, unable to wait for a more convenient season, and thinking more of his temporal interests than of any spiritual good he might get from our Lord's teaching, interrupted it, apparently, by eagerly requesting Jesus to judge be-

the general tenor of Old Testament Scripture, than any particular passage.

<sup>1</sup> The words of this discourse occur in other places, in different connexions. This confirms the impression that Christ often repeated His teaching.



tween himself and his brother : " Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." Our Lord would not act as a judge in such matters, for His mission was spiritual ; but He seized the occasion to warn men against covetousness and the love of riches. " Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Our Lord's words might be still more closely rendered : " Not even in the case of a man having great abundance does his life consist in his goods." *Life* depends on God—not on our goods, however abundant they may be ; and still less does our spiritual life consist in the possessions and riches of this world ; for these things too often hinder it, or even choke it altogether. In the parable of the man who laid up treasure, but was not rich toward God, the same truth is taught. It is a picture of a rich, avaricious man hoarding his wealth, and giving himself up to the enjoyment of it. " I will pull down my barns and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

In the colloquy which he proceeds to hold with his " soul," we must remember that by this word is intended not the man's higher spiritual nature, but the " natural man," that which feels, thinks, and enjoys. The plans which the man laid for the future were cut short. The soul which he thought his own was " required of him " that night.

The parable applies, not only to the wealthy man, but to *all* who, seeking only the things of this life, and setting their affections on them, are not rich towards God.

**Exhortations to Trustfulness and Preparation for the coming of the Lord (xii.**



22-40). Jesus now again turned from the crowd to His disciples. To them were spoken the next nineteen verses. The teaching, as we might expect, is to them, of a higher kind than to the multitude. The discourse falls into two parts: the blessedness and comfort of trustfulness in God and detachment from the world (vv. 22-34), and the duty of preparation for the next life (vv. 35-40).<sup>1</sup> The whole follows very naturally upon the earlier part of the chapter, before the interruption of verses 13 to 21. That St. Luke is giving us at least the substance of a connected discourse may be inferred from **St. Peter's Question, and Christ's Answer** (xii. 41-53). The Apostle interrupted his Master to inquire whether His words were meant for the disciples only, or for all. The answer, indirectly given, for the Lord *seemed* not to note the interruption, was to the effect that the greater the responsibility, the greater the watchfulness needed, and that all rewards depended upon the faithful discharge of duty.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the time of their trial far off. The crisis was indeed now close at hand. And the thought of it, with all it involved, to Himself and to others, pressed upon the Lord's spirit.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhortation to the People** (xii. 54-59). A few words of warning, addressed to the multitude, who had been surrounding Him all the time, closed the

<sup>1</sup> Verses 22-34 are found in St. Matthew, in the Sermon on the Mount; verses 35-40 in substance, and in part verbally, in Matt. xxiv. Verse 32 and the earlier part of verse 33 are, however, quite peculiar to St. Luke.

<sup>2</sup> The answer is partly found in another connection, in Matt. xxiv. 43-51.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John xii. 27. "A foretaste of the agony seems to pass over Christ's spirit." "An anticipation of Gethsemane."



discourse. Let them read the signs of the times, and prepare, for judgment is impending.<sup>1</sup>

**Lesson on God's Judgments; Parable of the Barren Fig-tree** (xiii. 1-10). There was, perhaps, a short interval after the last solemn words. They kindled thoughts in the people's minds, which at last found expression in a reference to a remarkable instance, as it was supposed, of God's vengeance on sinners.

This led our Lord to discourse of God's judgments, their meaning, and His merciful delay in executing them. When some great calamity overtakes our fellow-creatures, and hundreds or thousands of them perish, how are we to regard it? Are we to suppose that every one so visited by calamity has been specially sinful, and that others escaped because they did not deserve so to suffer? or that we were kept in safety by reason of our worthiness? No; they are *solemn calls to repentance* and *warnings* of coming judgments to all of us, unless we repent; for what our Lord said then to His own countrymen, He says now to us by His Evangelists, "Except ye repent, ye shall *all* likewise perish."<sup>2</sup>

These truths our Lord set forth in the parable of the barren fig-tree, which is recorded by St. Luke alone. The teaching of the parable is clear. God expects from us "the fruit of good works." But He is patient with us, giving us every opportunity. Yet at last, if there is no fruit, the time of judgment comes, and the sentence goes forth, "Cut it down."

<sup>1</sup> We find similar teaching in St. Matthew's Gospel, delivered at different times. See Matt. xvi. 2, v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> The Tower of Siloam, in ver. 4, was situated at the junction of the Tyropœon and Kedron valleys.



In its first application, the parable doubtless, was intended for the Jewish Church and people ; but in its spirit it applies to us all, both as individuals, and as a Church.<sup>1</sup>

**The Suffering Woman healed** (xiii. 10-17). This incident is only recorded by St. Luke. It took place, doubtless, during this Peræan journey, but the Evangelist gives no special note of time or place, except that the scene was a synagogue, and the day a sabbath.

Amongst the congregation was a woman painfully bowed together, and the Lord healed her ; and she, full of joy and gratitude, glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, far from rejoicing with her, reproved the people, with pretended indignation, for coming to be healed on the sabbath day.

In His indignant rebuke of the ruler's hypocrisy, our Lord grounded His argument on a reference to their own customs. They gave drink to their animals on the sabbath ; should not He bestow His grace of healing, both of body and soul, on this poor sufferer, who thirsted, we may well believe, from the Lord's treatment of her, for the water of life ?

**Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven** (xiii. 18-21). St. Matthew places these amongst the Parables of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> They are probably here in their right chronological order and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Isa. v. 7. The owner of the vineyard is God : the dresser of the vineyard, who acts as Intercessor, is Christ, and the "dressing," the graces of the Holy Spirit, which He offers to us through the means provided by His Church, represented by soil into which the dressing is put, and through which, it may be taken up by the roots of the tree.

<sup>2</sup> In his thirteenth chapter. We may note that, except in this second parable, leaven is used in Scripture as a type of sin. Cf. 1 Cor. v. 6-8 ; Gal. v. 9.



connection. The first shows us the power of the Gospel "as extending the Church," and the second "as regenerating the heart."

**The Journey to Jerusalem ; Warnings by the Way** (xiii. 22-30). Jerusalem had been the goal all through this journey, and the Lord now turned His face directly thitherwards. By the way, some one asked Him as to the number of the saved. The Lord conveyed a rebuke to the inquirer by reminding him of his own need to strive. The exhortations which follow are found in various places in St. Matthew's Gospel. Spoken under the solemn circumstances of this journey, they have a special significance. Jesus was pressing on to the full accomplishment of His mission ; the Jews were filling up the measure of their sins ; and the Gentiles, from east and west, from north and south, were soon to press eagerly into the newly opened Kingdom of Heaven.

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*NOTE.*

**On Luke xi. 14-32 compared with Matt. xii. 22-45.**

The differences are mainly these :—

St. Matthew's report of the conversation divides into two parts :

- (a) The answer to the charge of demoniacal agency.
- (b) The answer to the demand for a sign.

St. Luke's report throws these two together, making the answer, to both the charge and the sign-seeking, one. The answer, however, is broken by the interruption of the woman's exclamation.

If the two reports are of the same conversation, then St. Matthew's is out of chronological order. But the differences of "cast," as above noted, suggest the thought of two different, though very similar, conversations.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### Last Days of the Ministry.

MESSAGE TO HEROD—WARNING TO JERUSALEM—  
THE PHARISEE'S FEAST—WARNING TO COUNT  
THE COST—PARABLES—CAUTIONS TO THE DIS-  
CIPLES—THE TEN LEPERS—COMING OF THE  
KINGDOM—FURTHER PARABLES.

**M**ESSAGE to Herod (xiii. 31-33). The death of Lazarus and the message of his sisters to Jesus<sup>1</sup> probably synchronized with the incident at which we have now arrived. The Lord was still in Peræa, in the territory of Herod Antipas, but after two days He was intending to leave the district, and to go to Bethany in response to the message He had received.<sup>2</sup>

Whether the warning which some of the Pharisees gave our Lord was really due to a hint from Herod is doubtful. Herod may have desired His death, because His presence was a continual reproach to his own evil life. Yet when brought before Herod on Good Friday, the Tetrarch found no fault in Him.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Pharisees may have used the device to compel the Lord to retire to Judæa, and so to place Himself again in the power of His enemies.

<sup>1</sup> John xi.    <sup>2</sup> Cf. Luke xiii. 32; John xi. 6.    <sup>3</sup> Luke xxiii. 8, 15.



The message to Herod, though nominally to him, may really have been intended for the Pharisees.<sup>1</sup>

**The Warning to Jerusalem** (xiii. 34, 35). This may have been spoken, either in Peræa, immediately after the last incident, and thus have been suggested by the thought, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," or when Jesus was at Bethany a day or two afterwards, and close to the Holy City. St. Matthew records the words, as spoken in the Holy Week. They were therefore uttered twice, or St. Matthew's narrative is again out of chronological order.

**The Feast in the Pharisee's House** (xiv. 1-24). St. Luke, who alone records this incident, gives no note of time. We may suppose, with fair probability, that the feast was either at Bethany, or in Jerusalem, during Christ's very brief stay in the neighbourhood after the raising of Lazarus.

The invitation may have been given as a mark of respect, but the act of courtesy, on the part of the Pharisee, was probably more apparent than real. For "they watched Him." A man with the dropsy was present. According to Eastern customs, which permit strangers and lookers-on to enter a room in which a feast or meal is being held,<sup>2</sup> the man may have been there without special leave from the host. It is more likely, however, that his presence was part of the plot laid for our Lord. He took the initiative. "Is it lawful," He said, "to heal on the Sabbath day?"

<sup>1</sup> With this thought, some would translate "this fox," meaning the fox in their own hearts. Cf. Amos vii. 12, 13. The expression, "I shall be perfected," is thought by some to mean, "I complete" my work in Galilee and Peræa; others think it should be, "I complete my work" by the raising of Lazarus.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.



Receiving no answer, He healed the man, and then appealed to their own practice.<sup>1</sup> But they had nothing to say. It was the silence of hatred and malice.

Whilst the guests were assembling, our Lord had marked the scant courtesy with which they treated each other, in an eager struggling for the places of honour at the table. He took occasion from this to put forth a parable, applying the customs of society to teach a lesson in humility of spirit.

There was something perhaps in the tone of the guests that showed that their host had had other motives than those of real hospitality in inviting them. To the host, therefore, the next words were addressed. True hospitality, he is in effect told, does not look for a recompense. Curb any such temptation by feasting those who certainly cannot recompense thee.<sup>2</sup>

As the feast was progressing, one of the guests, moved by a sudden spiritual up-lifting, spoke of the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God. Our Lord did not, in His reply, deny this, but He showed, by the parable He spoke, that the invitation to the eating of the heavenly bread would by no means be so eagerly accepted as the guest seemed to suppose. The parable taught him that those who like himself and his fellow guests led respectable and decent lives, though certainly bidden, would as a body reject the summons to the banquet, in fact were rejecting it, when they refused His discipleship. The Lord went on to show that the invitation would be extended to

<sup>1</sup> Some would read "A son or" (even) "an ox" in ver. 5, R.V., margin, but cf. Luke xiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Our Lord, of course, does not forbid the friendly intercourse of kinsfolk and acquaintance: He only bids us beware of the motive, and at the same time to remember our poorer brethren, and their claims upon us. Cf. Neh. viii. 10.



the "publicans and sinners," who haunted the streets and lanes of their cities, and carried on their dishonest dealings in every office of custom and excise; and then even so, such was the largeness and greatness of the divine banqueting chamber, there would be room for those without, the Gentiles, and they, too, must be "persuaded" to come in.<sup>1</sup>

**Warning to count the Cost** (xiv. 25-35). Owing to the persecution of our Lord by His opponents He was obliged to leave the Holy City, very soon after the raising of Lazarus. He went, St. John tells us, to a place called Ephraim. To His journey there we may refer the next incident recorded by St. Luke, and in great part peculiar to him. Great multitudes followed the Lord. But the time of trial was at hand for Him and for them. Therefore He warned them. Let them count the cost. Everything must be sacrificed, if need be, for the sake of Christ. Without the spirit of self-denial there can be no true discipleship.

Jesus illustrated His meaning by two short parables, both counselling to reckon the cost. And for the third time He reminded His followers of what they ought to be—the salt of the earth.<sup>2</sup>

**Five Parables** (xv., xvi.). At this point St. Luke introduces five parables, without any note of place or time.<sup>3</sup> If he is still following a chronological order, as we have supposed, they were probably spoken on the journey to Ephraim, or during the sojourn there. The first three, those of **the**

<sup>1</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See Matt. v. 13; Mark ix. 50.

<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the first, which we find in a modified form in St. Matthew (xviii. 10-14), they are all peculiar to St. Luke.



**Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son**, were addressed to the Pharisees, who murmured at the reception accorded to publicans and sinners by Jesus Christ. The three parables were intended to shame these murmurers, by "holding up to them the angels of God, and God Himself, rejoicing at the conversion of a sinner ; and contrasting this liberal joy of Heaven with the narrow discontent and envious repinings of earth. Heaven and its holy inhabitants welcomed the penitent ; only his fellow-sinners kept him proudly aloof, as though there had been defilement for them in his touch ; as though they were wronged if he were freely forgiven."<sup>1</sup>

The three parables set forth God's love for sinners, and His desire for their return. These wanderers are represented as sheep, as pieces of money, as prodigal sons. The sin of the first is the sin of ignorance, and therefore claiming, if punishment, certainly also pity. The sin of the second is the sin of carelessness. They have been stamped with the image of God on their souls, signed with the sign of their Master, and yet "wilfully lose themselves in the world." The sin of these is greater than that of the first. They, for lack of knowledge, these in spite of knowledge, have been lost. But there is a greater sin yet—the sin of the prodigal, who has known the love of his heavenly Father, and yet voluntarily leaves that Father's home.

Again, as the sin in each case is greater, so on the other hand is the grace of God greater, for it receives back even the self-willed wanderer.

In the first two of these three parables is set forth the *seeking* love of God, without which no sinner could return to Him. The third sets forth the result of that

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Trench.



love, the "seeking after God in the changed heart of the penitent."

Very beautifully, too, does our Lord lift for a moment the veil hiding from us the unseen world, and bid us think of the angels of God caring for the welfare of His people on earth. What a brotherhood and communion does it seem to suggest.<sup>1</sup>

Many questions have been asked as to who are intended by the "the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." But surely without profit. The framework of the parable required the contrast between these and the sinner. The real point of the parable is in the care of God, and His Son Jesus Christ, for these lost ones. They seek for them, even until they are found, whilst their fellow men neglect them. This it was which Christ would teach the Pharisees.

In the conduct, too, of the elder son in the last parable,<sup>2</sup> difficulty has been found. But "is he not meant to show us how utterly imperfect is the goodness of the best men? How narrow and grudging is man's charity compared with the largeness of God's love! And mark that the father does not altogether blame him; our imperfect charity may be partly excused, because we cannot see, as God sees, the hearts of our fellow men. This elder brother knew not, as his father knew, the deep penitence of the prodigal."<sup>3</sup>

**The Unjust Steward** (xvi. 1-13). The fourth of the five parables was spoken to the disciples, to those probably who, from amongst the shrewd money-loving publicans, had attached themselves to the Lord. The

<sup>1</sup> "The tears of penitents are the wine of angels."—ST. BERNARD, quoted by Trench.

<sup>2</sup> This parable has been called "the crown and pearl of all our Lord's parables" (Stier); and "a Gospel within a Gospel" (Lange).

<sup>3</sup> Archdeacon Norris.



contrast throughout the parable is between the false and the true riches, and between the care which is often bestowed upon the false in comparison with the want of it in regard to the true.

Besides this, our Lord clearly lays down the principle, that God is absolute owner of all the wealth in this world, and that whatever we have, whether little or much, is held *in trust for God*. Consequently, we shall have to render an account to Him of the use we have made of His gifts. The steward, in the parable, tried to hide up his defalcations by fraudulently excusing to his Lord's debtors a part of their several debts.<sup>1</sup> The praise which the steward's master bestowed upon him had reference, of course, to the prudence he had shown, not to the cleverness of the fraud.

In applying the parable, Christ separates between the evil conduct of the steward, and the energy which he showed. This latter He singles out, and bids us imitate. "Make to yourselves friends," He says, "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."<sup>2</sup>

It is as if our Lord had said : Out of the mammon of unrighteousness (that is, by a right use of your worldly goods) make the poor and needy your friends, that, when ye die, they may welcome you into the "everlasting habitations of heaven. If you have not used aright the wealth of this world which God com-

<sup>1</sup> "Take thy bill," means "take it back and alter the amount as I shall direct." The "measure" of oil was the "bath" (Isa. v. 10; Ezek. xlv. 10-14), and equal to seven or eight gallons. The hundred measures of wheat contained about thirty-two pecks.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xvi. 9, R.V. The "of" of the A.V. is old English for "by means of."



mitted to you, how can you suppose He will give you the true riches?"

**The Rich Man and Lazarus** (xvi. 14-31). Our Lord's plain speaking, we are told, offended those of the Pharisees who were covetous, "and they derided him." Then He rebuked them, saying, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts." And He further warned them by the striking parable of *the rich man and Lazarus*.<sup>1</sup>

We may suppose that the rich man was one of those prosperous ungodly men of whom David speaks: "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish."<sup>2</sup>

Lazarus, on the other hand, though poor indeed in this world, was rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom. His very name seems to indicate his character — Lazarus, or Eleazar, "God is my helper."

How terrible the reverse for the rich man. Yesterday possessed of all earthly comforts, to-day praying for a drop of cold water; yesterday neglecting all opportunities for good, to-day asking for relief from Lazarus whom he had allowed to lie forgotten at his gate; yesterday despising Moses and the prophets, and saying in his heart "There is no God," to-day praying that Lazarus may be sent from the dead to

<sup>1</sup> The "covetousness" of the Pharisees showed itself in penuriousness, rather than in self-indulgence, for many of them led austere and even ascetic lives. Hence some have thought that the Parable was addressed rather to the luxurious and ease-loving Sadducees. But in reality, the root sin of both sects, as of the rich man in the parable, was *unbelief*.

<sup>2</sup> Psa. lxxiii.



testify to his brethren. But it was too late for any reversal. There was a great impassable gulf between him and Lazarus.<sup>1</sup> The parts were exchanged. "Son," said Abraham to him, "remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,<sup>2</sup> and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." And more than that. The rich man had neglected the means of grace given him by God. No miracle would have made any difference. So it would be with his brethren. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

**Cautions to the Disciples** (xvii. 1-10). These may be regarded as a divine commentary upon what had been passing between Christ and the Pharisees. The cautions were three: (1) *Against causing offence*,<sup>3</sup> or putting a snare or stumbling-block in the way of others. In the present condition of things, offences are sure to come, but rather than to be the cause of them, it would be better to lie dead at the bottom of the sea.

2. *Against an unforgiving spirit*. Very deeply did the disciples feel these two lessons. To rise to so high a stand-point as was indicated by them, needed, they felt, a very living faith. This seems to be the secret of their united prayer, "Lord, increase our faith."

<sup>1</sup> The "hell" of ver. 23 is "Hades," the place of departed spirits, where the saved and the lost are separated by the "great gulf."

<sup>2</sup> "*Thy* good things"—the only things he sought or cared for—the portion he chose. We must not suppose that riches and prosperity necessarily exclude a man from heaven; or that wretchedness here will ensure happiness hereafter.

<sup>3</sup> Comparing Matt. xviii. 1-7, and Mark ix. 33-50, with Luke xvii. 1, 2, it would seem that our Lord gave the caution about offences on more than one occasion.



3. The third caution was *against an immoderate sense of our own goodness*. The servant may indeed be good and faithful,<sup>1</sup> but after all he does nothing beyond his bare duty.

**The Ten Lepers** (xvii. 11-19). The great journey to Jerusalem, after more than one interruption, was at last to be completed.<sup>2</sup> The first incident of its last stage very naturally occurred in the border country between Samaria and Galilee. Of the village where it happened we know neither the name nor the situation. The ten lepers met Him at its entrance. These miserable outcasts had no doubt gathered together as soon as they heard that Jesus would pass that way, not without hope that He Who had worked such mighty miracles of healing would hear their prayer for help. They stood afar off, for the law commanded lepers to dwell apart.<sup>3</sup>

To their appeal for mercy, Jesus answered by directing them to go and show themselves to the priests.

Now the priests did not and could not heal leprosy ; but when leprosy showed itself in any one, the priest pronounced him unclean ; and if it disappeared the priest again restored the same person to the fellowship of the congregation.<sup>4</sup> Why then did our Lord command these still uncleansed lepers to show themselves to the priests? Doubtless to try their faith, which seems not to have faltered ; for "it came to pass, that *as they went* they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that *he was healed*, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God ; . . . and he

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 21, 23.

<sup>2</sup> See further, above, chapter xxxi. page 264. The healing of the ten lepers is only recorded by St. Luke.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xiii. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Lev. xiv. 3, 4.



was a Samaritan." In the case of this Samaritan, the healing of his body was followed we may believe by the cleansing of his soul from the far worse leprosy of sin; and the ingratitude of the nine unthankful lepers reminds us how much more ready we are to call upon God in the time of trouble than to glorify Him when He has wrought a deliverance for us.

**On the Coming of the Kingdom of God** (xvii. 20-37). The discourse which followed upon the last incident was evidently suggested by the demand of the Pharisees as to the coming of the kingdom of God. Our Lord's answer was perhaps, to them, as unbelievers, an enigmatical one. Its intention seems to have been to lead away their minds from the thought of a visible kingdom, the manifestation of which was yet in the far future, to that of a spiritual kingdom whose establishment was now close at hand. The kingdom of God, He tells them, comes unexpectedly; it had indeed already, in its spiritual sense, come, for its Head, the Messiah, was standing amongst them.<sup>1</sup>

From answering the Pharisees, the Lord turned to His disciples, to correct *their* misapprehensions, and yet to comfort and encourage them. For their encouragement He assured them that there should be a visible manifestation of the kingdom, but not yet. Before it came, they would often sigh for one of those happy past days of their Master's presence, and long for His return. In answer to their longing, many would bid them see the approaching end in the events around them. But these they must not follow.

<sup>1</sup> "Among you" (A.V., margin), or "in the midst of you" (R.V. margin), is a better translation than "within you" in ver. 21. Had the words been addressed to the disciples, they might have had the spiritual meaning involved in "within you" (cf. Eph. iii. 17), but they were spoken to Pharisees, who were unbelievers.



They must patiently wait. There would be no doubt of the coming, when it really happened. It would be a revelation to the whole world. But there must be a time first of suffering and humiliation. And when the Son of Man returned, it would be so suddenly and unexpectedly that the majority of men would be altogether taken by surprise. Nevertheless, for their consolation, those who have prepared for the coming, and been watchful, who "have abandoned earthly things for their Lord's sake," shall be gathered out from among men, and "taken up,"<sup>1</sup> to be with the Lord.

The disciples, eagerly listening, asked Him "Where, Lord?" "Where," they seem to say, "where will all this happen?" And Jesus Christ, in His reply, draws away their minds from any idea of special locality. Wherever there is true discipleship, wherever two or three are gathered in His name, there the Lord will be recognized at His coming, and they will be gathered unto Him. And on the other hand, since the Lord had spoken of selection, of rejection of one with acceptance of another, wherever there is spiritual decay and death, there will be judgment.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhortation to Prayer** (xviii. 1-14). These verses are peculiar to St. Luke. They are a sequel to the foregoing discourse. The true attitude of the Church, during the long period of suffering soon to come, must be one of prayer. And that prayer must be earnest and persevering, but at the same time

<sup>1</sup> Such is the meaning of the Greek word translated simply "taken" both in A.V. and R.V. The teaching is exactly that of John xiv. 3, where the same word occurs ("receive you unto Myself"). Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17. The R.V. follows the margin of A.V. in omitting ver. 36.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of our Lord's answer has been much debated. It had probably a two-fold reference, as suggested above, even as the disciples' "where," seems surely to include both "the taken up" and "the left."



humble. Our Lord conveyed His lesson in the form of two parables, those of *the godless judge*, and of *the Pharisee and Publican*. However long it may be delayed, the answer will certainly come to faithful prayer. And when it comes, it will be seen to have been at the right moment—speedily.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, however persevering, prayer must be humble. The Pharisaic spirit of self-righteousness seems to have shown itself in some of the disciples. The Lord checked this with the second parable. In it, Jesus teaches us that such a prayer as the Pharisee's is not really a prayer at all, but merely a display of vain-glory. The true prayer is that of the Publican, who sought relief for a burdened conscience in a confession of sin, and a cry for mercy. And such prayer is certain of its answer.<sup>2</sup>

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### NOTES.

#### A. On the Presence of Strangers at an Eastern Feast.

“ At dinner at the Consul's house at Damietta we were much interested in observing a custom of the country. In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their places on those side-seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them. This made us understand the scene in Simon's house at Bethany, where Jesus sat at supper, and Mary came in and anointed His feet with ointment ; and also the scene in the Pharisee's house, where the woman who

<sup>1</sup> As St. Peter teaches us (2. iii. 8). Cf. Rev. vi. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> See note C at the end of the chapter. We should observe that both worshippers are represented as *standing*, the customary position of a Jew when engaged in prayer.



was a sinner came in uninvited and yet not forbidden, and washed His feet with her tears. We afterwards saw this custom at Jerusalem, and there it was still more fitted to illustrate these incidents."—*Narrative of a Missionary, quoted by Trench.*

### B. On the Parable of the Great Supper.

The general scope of the parable is given in the text. It may be variously applied. "To the proud, Christ's ministers are simply to bear their witness—'call them that are bidden.' The sinners they are to win and guide—'go out and bring in.' On the humble and diffident they are to bring all their sweet, constraining influences—'persuade them to come in.'"—ARCHDEACON NORRIS.

In the whole parable we are to see Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, carrying out His Father's work; (1) Christ did it by Moses and the prophets, the first summons; (2) Christ did it by Himself, the second summons; (3) Christ does it by His Ministers, the third summons.

The parable, of course, is quite distinct from that of St. Matthew (xxii. 1).

### C. On the word "justified" in St. Luke xviii. 14.

The word often occurs in St. Paul's Epistles. The sense in which the Apostle uses it is made clear by this parable. The prayer of the Publican was for mercy, that is, for pardon. Our Lord implies that his prayer was heard. This is what He calls being "justified." *To be justified* therefore means *to be pardoned*, or, as it may be expressed, *placed in a right relation to God, recognized as righteous.* Cf. Matt. xi. 19.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### Last Days of the Ministry.

CHRIST AND THE INFANTS—THE RICH YOUNG RULER—CHRIST AND ZACCHÆUS—ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM—MONDAY AND TUESDAY IN THE HOLY WEEK.

**I**NFANTS brought to Christ (xviii. 15-17).

We have now arrived at that point in the narrative of our Lord's life at which the accounts of the three earlier Evangelists fall together again. The end is drawing near. The scene, however, is still for a short time laid in Peræa.

The first incident of the common narrative, if so we may call it, is the bringing of young children, or infants, as St. Luke calls them, to Jesus. St. Luke records one specially touching point. Jesus, he says, *called* the infants to Him. The Church, as we know, rightly adopts the incident, as authorizing the baptism of infants.

**The Rich Young Ruler** (xviii. 18-23). That the questioner was a *ruler* is noted only by St. Luke. The demand which the Lord made upon him was in truth a tremendous one. Had he been equal to it, he would indeed have answered the call, "Friend, come



up higher." But he was not equal to it. He failed. Our gifts may indeed be a terrible snare to us.<sup>1</sup>

**Christ foretells His Passion** (xviii. 31-34). St. Luke alone mentions our Lord's reference, in this announcement of His approaching sufferings, death and resurrection, to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. It is just one of those passages which show us how deeply our blessed Saviour must have studied the Old Testament, and applied its teaching to Himself. Probably several passages were now present to His mind, and He gave to His disciples the result, if so we may say, of His meditation upon them all.<sup>2</sup>

St. Luke, as writing for Gentile Christians, omits the special mention by our Lord of the part to be played by the Jewish rulers; and adds that the disciples "understood none of these things." Their firm faith in the prophecies respecting the greatness and glory of the Messiah had blinded their eyes to those equally explicit prophecies, which spoke of Him as a Sufferer and as a Sin-bearer. They could not, as yet, reconcile the two. After the day of Pentecost, it was all clear to them.<sup>3</sup>

**The Blind Man at Jericho healed** (xviii. 35-43). Jericho was now reached. St. Luke's account, when compared with those of St. Matthew and St. Mark, makes the exact locality of the miracle doubtful. Probably it took place between the older town, and the new Herodian town higher up the plain. If this be so, the accounts are easily reconciled,

<sup>1</sup> On this incident, and St. Peter's subsequent question, see further, chapters ix. and xix., pages 58 and 144.

<sup>2</sup> See Psa. xxii., Isa. liii., and especially for the phrase "The Son of Man," Dan. vii. 13, compared with Dan. ix. 24-27.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 23-36, xvii. 3, etc.



although the variation is but trifling, and such as might very well occur. We may be quite sure, that did we know all the circumstances, there would be no difficulty.

**Jesus and Zacchæus** (xix. 1-10). Jericho was an important place in the time of our Lord. It was a city of the priests, and the site of one of the Schools of the Prophets—institutions answering roughly to the Theological Colleges of our own day. The situation of the city was pleasant, and the surrounding country one of the most fruitful districts of Palestine. The trade of Jericho was considerable, for it lay on a great commercial highway, between Peræa and Judæa, and close to fords of the Jordan. From this circumstance, there were many publicans, or tax-gatherers, also resident in the city.

The chief of these was Zacchæus, the story of whose conversion is related only by St. Luke. Zacchæus desired greatly to see Jesus, not probably out of mere curiosity, but from a higher and nobler motive. Being short of stature, he could not see the Lord, by reason of the crowd. He resorted to the expedient, unusual for such a person, of running forward and climbing a sycamore tree.<sup>1</sup> The Lord saw him, and invited Himself as a guest of the eager publican. At the feast which followed, Zacchæus did not boast of what *had* already been his practice, but rather made a vow of what he would do."<sup>2</sup> He wished to show the reality of his repentance by bringing forth its fruits. And the Lord accepted him, assuring him that "salvation had that day come to his house."

**The Parable of the Pounds** (xix. 11-27).

<sup>1</sup> Or, wild fig-tree.

<sup>2</sup> See ver. 8.



This parable, which is peculiar to St. Luke, is marked by the Evangelist as an addition to what the Lord had just said to Zacchæus. It was probably spoken, not in the house of the publican, but shortly after the resumption of the journey to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> It was intended to teach the disciples and people that there was no immediate appearance of the kingdom of God to be looked for, and its lesson is the need of patient waiting, and diligent work.

The people were not wrong in thinking of Messiah as a King. There were many prophecies foretelling that He should be a King.<sup>2</sup> But they erred in thinking of that King and His kingdom as merely magnificent, glorious, and temporal. They erred, too, in overlooking those other prophecies which told of victory through suffering, of humiliation and of death before the reign in glory.

The parable of the pounds represented to the people what their Messiah was about to do. Having fulfilled the mystery of His humiliation, suffering and atonement, to which here indeed no allusion is made, He would go to the Father, "to be enthroned in His heavenly state, and in Heaven to rule over all as the Son of Man."<sup>3</sup> But this was not all; for, "it may with equal truth be affirmed that He went to receive solemn investiture of that earthly kingdom which He had purchased with His blood, and which hereafter He shall return and claim as His own, sitting on the

<sup>1</sup> See ver. 11. It has been suggested that the parable was spoken within sight of the palace which Archelaus had built near Jericho. Our Lord also seems to have made use of recent history in part, as the groundwork of His parable. Both Herod the Great and his son Archelaus had gone to a "far country," to Rome that is, to "receive a kingdom."

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16; Isa. ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Luke i. 32, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 7, 8; Phil. ii. 9-11.



throne of His father David ; and the parable itself suggests this last as the kingdom intended here.”<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the parable of the talents, in St. Matthew,<sup>2</sup> where the sums entrusted to the servants are of various amounts, figuring the variety and character of the gifts with which God endows men, this parable speaks of the same sum being entrusted to each person. Each servant of the kingdom has, in fact, the same duty, whatever his “talents.” He must be “faithful and active,” waiting his Lord’s return. And when the Lord returns, He will reward each according to his work, and will punish him who has been careless and slothful.<sup>3</sup>

But this is not all, for in the parable the king commands his enemies to be slain in his presence, and in these words we have set forth the wrath of the Lord Jesus Himself against all whom He shall find at His coming in open rebellion against Him. This vengeance was executed in part against the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem ; but it will only have its full accomplishment when our Lord returns in glory to take to Himself “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,” and to put down all enemies under His feet.

**The Entry into Jerusalem** (xix. 28-48). The road from Jericho to Jerusalem was a gradual ascent of about three thousand feet.<sup>4</sup> Along this road our Lord went, taking perhaps two days about the

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Trench.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> “Occupy” (in ver. 13, A.V.) means “trade ye *herewith*,” as in R.V. Ver. 25 appears to be an interruption of the listeners, keenly interested in the parable. Our Lord does not seem to have noticed the interruption.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* from 600 feet below the Mediterranean Sea to about 2400 feet above it. St. Luke alone calls attention to the “ascent.”



journey.<sup>1</sup> On Sunday, Nisan 9th, He entered Jerusalem. The narrative of the entry is given by all the four Evangelists.

We need only to notice here the points peculiar to St. Luke. When the enthusiasm of the disciples broke out into loud Messianic cries of "Hosanna," St. Luke alone tells us that they were then "at the descent of the Mount of Olives," about to cross the Kedron valley, and to enter into the Holy City.

The words "peace in heaven," recalling the angelic hymn, "On earth peace,"<sup>2</sup> and offering, as it were, a comment upon them, are given us only by St. Luke, who, again, writing for Gentiles, translates "*Hosanna*" into "*Glory* in the highest."

The offence which the Pharisees took at the honours paid to Jesus, and the Lord's answer<sup>3</sup> to their exposition, are recorded only by St. Luke.

And above all, it is to this Evangelist that we owe the preservation of our Lord's pathetic lament over Jerusalem. The exact situation of the place from which "He, when He beheld the city, wept over it," is probably a smooth ledge of rock just at the point, when to a traveller from Jericho, "the whole city bursts into view."<sup>4</sup>

How human was this weeping; how more than human that prophetic gaze into futurity! The prophecy passed into history about forty years afterwards.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That there was a hostelry on the way we know from the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> The answer was given in the form of a well-known proverb. Cf. Hab. ii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> See STANLEY'S *Sinai and Palestine*, iii.

<sup>5</sup> It was fulfilled to the very letter. The "trench," or rather "stockade" of ver. 43 (in R.V. "bank," margin "palisade") was actually raised by Titus. Cf. Isa. xxix. 3, 4; Luke xxi. 20. The expression "day of visitation" of ver. 44, though commonly used of a day of punish-



**Monday**, 10th Nisan (xix. 45-48). St. Luke's record of this day is very brief. He notices the cleansing of the Temple, but omits the retirement to Bethany, and the withering of the fig-tree. The *daily teaching* in the Temple is mentioned by St. Luke alone, and is thought to indicate that the Wednesday in the Holy Week was not the day of retirement it is generally supposed to have been. The attention, too, with which the people *hung upon*<sup>1</sup> his words is only mentioned by St. Luke.<sup>2</sup>

**Tuesday**, 11th Nisan (xx., xxi.). The first incident of this day was the *Question as to Authority*. St. Luke's account tallies closely with those of St. Matthew and St. Mark. He tells us, however, what the priests were afraid of from the people—"all the people will stone us."

In *the Parable of the Vineyard* which followed, St. Luke only tells us that it was addressed "to the people," whilst their exclamation "God forbid," and the Lord's grave answering look, are peculiar to him. St. Luke omits the latter part of the quotation from Psa. cxviii. 22, as well as the solemn warning added by St. Matthew.<sup>3</sup>

The result of the parable was an immediate<sup>4</sup> conspiracy against Jesus, on the part of the rulers. By way of finding cause of accusation against Him,<sup>5</sup> they put to Jesus two captious questions, the first respecting

ment, is sometimes, as here, used of a day of grace (Luke i. 68). Cf. Gen. i. 24.

<sup>1</sup> So, better, A.V. margin, and R.V.

<sup>2</sup> St. Mark notes their "astonishment."

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxi. 43.

<sup>4</sup> "The same hour," peculiar to St. Luke.

<sup>5</sup> So as to be able to "deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor." An important note, peculiar to St. Luke, showing their already matured plans.



the tribute to Cæsar, and the second in reference to the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to St. Luke for the remark that the emissaries of Christ's opponents were to "feign themselves just men," or in Jewish phraseology, men "zealous for the law, and the theocracy."

In our Lord's answer to the Sadducees, St. Luke makes the important addition, "for all live unto Him," of ver. 38. Our Lord means that though those whom we call dead have passed out of our sight, they are living in God's sight. St. Paul in preaching at Athens applied these words to explain the relation between God and man, as His creature ;<sup>2</sup> and in his Epistle to the Romans, he gives them a "practical application to the life and duties of Christians."<sup>3</sup>

Our Lord's words extorted, St. Luke tells us, words of admiration from some of His hearers, "Master, Thou hast well said."

It was now the Lord's turn to assume the offensive. He asked the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees together, a question concerning Himself. The question was intended, doubtless, to lead them up to a higher view of the Messiah, who, according to their own Scriptures was to be a Divine Being, and therefore much more than simply the Son of David. But their unbelief and hardness of heart were proof against this as all other efforts of our Lord, to reveal the truth to them. They were compelled therefore to confess their ignorance, and inability to answer.

His enemies silenced, our Lord warned the people against the teaching and practice of the Scribes, and

<sup>1</sup> The Pharisees and Herodians put the first, the Sadducees the second (Mark xii. 13, 18).

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xiv. 8.



then, in the incident of *the Widow's Mite*,<sup>1</sup> found a lesson upon the true spirit of all offerings to God.

This Tuesday, one of the greatest days in our Lord's ministry, closed with the great discourse, on Mount Olivet, respecting the future of Jerusalem and of the Christian Church. The discourse, as we know, was occasioned by the anxiety of the disciples to know when their Master's words about the Temple would be fulfilled. Their question embraced two points—the destruction of Jerusalem, and their Lord's second coming at the end of the world.<sup>2</sup> They expected the two events to happen at the same time. But the Lord tells them, in verse 24, that there should be an interval between the two, of certainly considerable although indefinite length. "Jerusalem," He said, "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*."<sup>3</sup> We owe this important prophetic note to St. Luke. And how literally are the words being still fulfilled. The Mohammedan mosque of Omar occupies the site of the ancient Temple, and the city is ruled over by the Turks.

In the parable of the fig-tree, St. Luke adds "and all the trees." The disciples are to read the signs of the times in the events passing before their eyes.

The concluding verses of the discourse in St. Luke, although they vary considerably from the reports of St. Matthew and St. Mark, contain the same general lesson as to the need of watchfulness.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See Matt. xxiv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Compare St. Paul's words, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25). See further, note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> We should note (a) ver. 34, "that day," suggesting the comparison of St. Paul, with whom the expression is not infrequent. See 2 Thess. i. 10 ;



## NOTES.

**A. On "Casting their Gifts into the Treasury."**

The Treasury was in the court of women (so called because women might not go beyond it except for the purposes of sacrificing), for here were placed against the wall thirteen trumpet-shaped chests in which the legal contributions to the Temple service were deposited, and also voluntary gifts; four of the thirteen being appropriated to these latter donations.

**B. On the Discourse on Mount Olivet.**

The discourse has been variously divided. We have in the main,

(i.) A fourfold division :—

(a) Verses 8–24 relating to the Fall of Jerusalem.

(b) „ 25–28 „ „ Second Advent.

(c) „ 29–33 „ again to the Fall of Jerusalem.

(d) „ 34–36 „ „ Second Advent.

(ii.) A two-fold division :—

(a) Verses 8–33 relating to the Fall of Jerusalem, with the intimation that there would be a long interval (ver. 24) between the Fall of Jerusalem and the Second Advent.

(b) Verses 34–36 relating to the Second Advent.

This division is much to be preferred to the first, which introduces a needlessly complex arrangement.

It may seem that the expressions in verses 25–27 are beyond such an event as the fall of Jerusalem. But the prophets frequently use such metaphors to describe earthly catastrophes. We may remember, too, St. Peter's interpretation of Joel's prophecy (Joel ii. 28–32; Acts ii. 17). A careful comparison, too, of the discourse as given by the three Synoptists will make it clear that St. Luke, omitting the words in which our Lord passed on to answer the question about the end of the world (Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32), takes up the thread in his 34th verse, giving us a much shorter version than St. Matthew of the conclusion of the discourse.

2 Tim. i. 12; and cf. Rom. ii. 16, xiii. 12; 1 Cor. i. 8, iii. 13; Phil. i. 6, ii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 2, etc. (b) ver. 35. The metaphor is not taken as usual, as in St. Matt. and St. Mark, from a thief, but from a snare for birds, etc. Cf. Isa. xxiv. 17; Eccles. ix. 12. See also 1 Tim. iii. 7.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

### The Obedience unto Death.

THE LAST SUPPER—THE AGONY—THE BETRAYAL—  
PETER'S DENIAL—THE TRIAL—THE CRUCIFIXION  
—THE DEATH AND BURIAL.

**WEDNESDAY**, 12th Nisan (xxii. 1-6). This was either a day of retirement at Bethany, or, as St. Luke appears to suggest,<sup>1</sup> of still active teaching in the temple.

Meanwhile His enemies were plotting against His life. Even while they were deliberating, an offer of betrayal came from one of the Twelve. This was probably on the Wednesday. Judas had been permitting the lust of covetousness to grow within him,<sup>2</sup> and now it altogether got the better of him. To gratify it, he even decided to betray his Master. In the terribly significant language of St. Luke, "Satan entered into Him."

The rulers who had at first decided to defer any active measures until after the feast,<sup>3</sup> were still afraid of the enthusiasm of the Galilean pilgrims. They laid

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 47, xxi. 37, 38. His words may, however, be taken to refer to what Jesus had been doing on the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

<sup>2</sup> John xii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 5. It has been noticed that while they were deciding to wait for a week, Jesus was telling His disciples that He, the true Paschal Lamb, would be crucified before the Passover.



therefore one condition upon Judas, that the betrayal should be *in the absence of the multitude*.

**Thursday**, 13th Nisan (xxii. 7-38). This day, if any, was spent in retirement. In the afternoon, probably, it was that our blessed Lord sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover for Him and His disciples. At the appointed place they made ready, and in the evening<sup>1</sup> Jesus came, and "sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him."

The words of our Lord, in verses 15 to 17, which have been preserved by St. Luke alone, are very important, because they show that the Lord regarded the meal of which He was now partaking as a true paschal meal, although it may have been, as many think, anticipatory.<sup>2</sup> It was fitting that He should thus solemnly take leave of the Passover of the Old Covenant before He instituted, in its place, the Christian Passover Feast of the Holy Communion, which was to be a means and a pledge of communion with Him until His coming again.

In St. Matthew's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and in St. Mark's account, which may be regarded as St. Peter's, we have "the divinely aided recollections of two of the Apostles who were present." St. Paul's account was received, as he himself tells us, by special revelation from the Lord Himself. The remarkable verbal agreement between that

<sup>1</sup> This, according to Jewish reckoning, from sunset to sunset, would be the beginning of Friday, 14th Nisan.

<sup>2</sup> The day for killing the paschal lamb was 14th Nisan, and for eating it, 15th Nisan. This latter did not commence until the evening of Good Friday. Hence our Lord's last paschal supper was eaten by anticipation, whilst He Himself, the True Paschal Lamb, was slain on the right day according to the law, *i.e.* Good Friday. The disciples do not appear to have understood this at the time. Cf. Luke xxiii. 54; John xiii. 1, 29, xviii. 28, xix. 14.



account and St. Luke's leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that St. Luke was indebted to St. Paul, whose faithful friend and companion he was, for several of the particulars he has recorded.<sup>1</sup>

The announcement of the approaching betrayal which follows, in St. Luke's narrative, the institution of the Lord's Supper is placed earlier in the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark. It was a last terrible warning to the traitor.<sup>2</sup>

From St. Luke alone we learn that there was, at this solemn moment, a renewal of the strife amongst the disciples, as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. It had often broken out before. That it should have done so now, was a sad proof of the still carnal and low thoughts of the disciples. In reproving them our Lord spoke of Himself "as He that serveth." The allusion is evidently to His washing the disciples' feet, which He had either just concluded, or was then in the act of performing, and affords us a very interesting coincidence between the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John.<sup>3</sup>

There seem to have been two warnings given to St. Peter, one whilst they were still in the upper chamber, and the other when they were on the way to the Mount of Olives. St. Luke and St. John<sup>4</sup> record the former, St. Matthew and St. Mark the latter. St. Luke's narrative, however, in some respects is peculiar

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This difference in order makes it doubtful whether Judas did, or did not, partake of the Holy Communion at its institution. Cf. John xiii. 18-29. We should note how, in ver. 22, our Lord dwells on the thought of fulfilled prophecy, "as it was determined."

<sup>3</sup> The order seems to be this : (a) The strife ; (b) The first part of the reproof ; (c) Practical exhortation, by the washing of the feet, with the second part of the reproof (vv. 26, 27), as, if we may so say, a running commentary.

<sup>4</sup> John xiii. 36-38.



to itself. It was not Judas alone whom Satan had desired to have, but the whole band of the Twelve. Into Judas he had entered. The one next in chiefest danger was Peter, the earnest and loving, but impetuous and eager. For him, His Master had made special prayer, and though he would fall, he would turn again,<sup>1</sup> and be able to strengthen his brethren.<sup>2</sup> There followed a short conversation between Jesus and the disciples, which is peculiar to St. Luke. The Master's words of coming days of trial and persecution, and of the need of precaution and even of weapons of self-defence. But the most interesting point to notice is the presence of Isaiah's prophecy to the mind of our Lord. In the troubles which were about to begin, they would be treated as law-breakers, but in this they would only all the more resemble Him, Who would soon be "numbered with the transgressors,"<sup>3</sup> for the end was nigh.<sup>4</sup>

The Lord now withdrew, "as He was wont,"<sup>5</sup> to the Mount of Olives. Here, parted from the disciples by "about a stone's cast,"<sup>6</sup> He suffered that agony of soul which we cannot fathom. We may only say that He who did no sin, was suffering for us, bearing our sins in His own body.<sup>6</sup> Yet we may remember, too, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us,<sup>7</sup> the agony was a wrestling in prayer with his heavenly Father, upon Whom, Christ, as the Son of Man, ever leant for strength.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Luke xxii. 32. R.V.

<sup>2</sup> For the metaphor of "sifting" cf. Amos. ix. 9, 10; and for the impression made upon St Peter, see 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. liii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John xix. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Peculiar to St. Luke.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 21-24.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. v. 7-10.

<sup>8</sup> To St. Luke we owe the notice of the nature of the perspiration produced by the agony of "strong crying and tears." As a physician, St. Luke naturally marks the fact.



As before, at the close of the Wilderness Temptation, so now, an angel ministered unto Him, supporting and strengthening the enfeebled human body.<sup>1</sup>

**Friday**, 14th Nisan<sup>2</sup> (xxii. 47-xxiii. 55). While Jesus and His disciples were yet in the upper room, and the Eleven listened in silence, dejection, and foreboding, to their Lord's last sad words of love and counsel, Judas, having separated himself from their company, was hastening to the chief priests and elders to carry out with them his scheme of treachery. They quickly made the necessary preparations. The guard of the Temple gathered under their captains. A detachment of Roman soldiers from Fort Antonia, eager to take part in the arrest of a dangerous popular favourite, were soon ready to follow and assist the Jewish leaders of such an enterprise. Grave members of the Sanhedrin and their servants, and lawless fanatics armed with swords and staves, swelled the motley band ; and though they had the bright shining of the Paschal full moon to light them on their way, yet they carried torches and lanterns, lest Jesus or His followers should take refuge under the shade of the olive-trees or in the darker caves and empty tombs that studded the western side of Olivet. Judas led the way, walking in advance ; for he was to hail his Master with friendly greeting, and point Him out to the others by the traitor's kiss.

The arrest was quickly made, for Jesus voluntarily surrendered Himself into the hands of the soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke alone records the presence of the angel.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to mark accurately the point in the narrative when, according to our reckoning, the Thursday passed into Friday. We may conveniently assume it, as being at the moment of the betrayal and arrest. By Jewish reckoning, it had been Friday for some hours.



Even in that trying moment, with the gentle request, "Suffer ye thus far,"<sup>1</sup> He freed His hand that the soldiers had seized to fetter, and with a more than human patience and forbearance, raised it to heal the ear of the high priest's servant which Peter<sup>2</sup> had cut off.

Our Lord was taken, in the first instance, as we know from St. John,<sup>3</sup> to the apartments of Annas in the high priest's palace. Annas was no longer high priest himself, having been deposed by the Romans ; but he had secured the appointment of his son-in-law, Caiaphas, to the office, and thus his authority remained practically undiminished. After a brief informal examination here, Jesus was conveyed across the courtyard to the apartments of Caiaphas. Here it would appear that a second informal examination was held, and then, about five o'clock in the morning, the Sanhedrin assembled and the actual trial began.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst our Lord was being conveyed across the courtyard from the rooms of Annas to those of Caiaphas, there occurred that affecting incident, recorded only by St. Luke. Peter had found his way into the courtyard ; there the three denials took place. As Jesus was crossing the court immediately after the third, He "turned and looked upon Peter." That look

<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain whether these words were spoken to the disciples or to His captors. St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us that they "laid hands on Jesus and took him" before the servant's ear was cut off. Hence, our Lord most likely made the request so that He might be at liberty to work the miracle, the mention of which is peculiar to St. Luke. Besides ver. 51, we are indebted to St. Luke for his mention of "the chief priests" in ver. 52, and our Lord's words in ver. 53, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," meaning this is the time permitted to you and the powers of evil, by God, to work your will upon Me.

<sup>2</sup> As we learn from St. John.

<sup>3</sup> John xviii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> The examination before Caiaphas seems to be alluded to in Luke xxii. 63-65, but is not otherwise mentioned by the Evangelist.



went straight to the heart of the conscience-stricken Apostle, who remembering the Lord's warning and his own boastful words, went out and wept bitterly.

The judicial proceedings before the Council<sup>1</sup> were little better than a mere form. The condemnation of Jesus had been determined upon. He had no advocate, nor were witnesses called to testify in His favour.

St. Luke, omitting all other details, gives us only the two leading questions, which led to our Lord's condemnation, and His answers, which, we may say, procured that condemnation. The first question related to the Messiahship. In making His avowal, that He was the Messiah, and which, in itself would not have been blasphemous, our Lord referred to Daniel's prophecy about the Son of Man.<sup>2</sup> He intended it as a solemn claim of Divinity, and it was so understood by the council. This, in their view, was blasphemy. The high priest, however, by asking a second question, "Art Thou then the Son of God?" gave Jesus an opportunity of either withdrawing or qualifying His statement. To have done so, might have saved His life. Was it, may we think, a last effort of the "power of darkness"? It may have been, but it was futile. The Lord at once assented to the interpretation, "Ye say that I am," and so, a Martyr to His claim to be Divine, He sealed His death-warrant. "I lay down my life of Myself."

**The Trial before Pilate** (xxiii. 1-7). In our own country, when an accused person has been tried by lawful tribunal and found guilty of a crime for which

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless there were many of the Sanhedrin present at the examinations before Annas and Caiaphas, but verse 66 records the official assembling of the council, for which the proceedings, so far, had been merely preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> Dan. vii. 13.



the penalty is death, the judge, in accordance with the verdict of the jury, passes sentence upon him ; but before that sentence can be carried out it must receive the sanction of the sovereign. Except in special cases of appeal, this sanction is never refused ; the justice of the verdict and the impartiality of the judge being taken for granted.

It was just such a sanction as this that the judges of the Sanhedrin desired should be given to their sentence against the Lord by Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judæa. They did not wish him to call their judgment in question, but simply to ratify it.

Pilate was not a scrupulous man. In a matter of policy or expediency—to prevent or to quell a tumult, to sweep out of his way any opposing obstacle—he was not wont to waste time by asking many questions. In such cases he could shed human blood without compunction, and people shuddered as they told how he had caused it to flow in the Temple itself, and mingled the blood of his victims with that of the sacrifices. Pilate, then, was severe, tyrannical and passionate, the whip of the Jewish kings becoming in his hands a scourge of scorpions ; but he was not wantonly cruel, and his treatment of our Lord showed that he had some sense of justice and some desire to protect the innocent—if that could be done without risk of injury to himself.

In his account of the trial before Pilate, St. Luke gives several details peculiar to himself. The actual charge which the Council brought against Jesus is one of these,<sup>1</sup> as also is the fierceness and urgency with

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 2. The charge was a false one, but it served their purpose, which we see from their translation, for Pilate's information, of the word Christ, "Christ a King."



which they pressed it.<sup>1</sup> In the course of their clamour, they spoke of Galilee.

Pilate, whose quick eye had discerned that the council had not brought Jesus before him because of their devotion to Cæsar, but by reason "of envy," was inclined to mercy, and yet he feared to exasperate these passionate men, whose influence at Rome was considerable. He eagerly therefore seized upon the mention of Galilee as a pretext for sending Him before Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, who was on a visit to Jerusalem at the time.

**Trial before Herod** (xxii. 8-12). This incident is peculiar to St. Luke. The narrative leads us to suppose<sup>2</sup> that Pilate, for some reason unknown to us, desired to conciliate Herod. At any rate Herod appears to have regarded Pilate's action as a compliment, for the result was that they "were made friends together."

Had our Lord been a mere man, He would have been anxious, we may suppose, to arouse Herod's sense of justice, and to secure his protection. But, looking straight on to the end, and knowing to its very core the character of Herod, Jesus refused even a word of reply to the Tetrarch's questions.

Herod, angered by the Lord's silence, and yet paying little regard to the vehement accusations of the chief priests, treated Jesus contemptuously, and then sent him back to Pilate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The connection between St. Luke's third and fourth verses can only be clearly seen by a reference to the fuller account of St. John (xviii. 33-38).

<sup>2</sup> See verse 12.

<sup>3</sup> Herod's curiosity to see Jesus is referred to by St. Luke both in this passage, and in ix. 9. The "gorgeous" robe in which he and his soldiers arrayed our Lord was probably a *white* one. Cf. Acts x. 30; James ii. 2, 3, where the same word is used. See also Rev. xv. 6, xix. 8, where the word is rendered "white" in A.V., and cf. Rev. xxii. 1 ("clear as crystal"), xxii. 16 (bright).



**Trial before Pilate renewed** (xxiii. 13-26). Thus Pilate's expedient for getting rid of the case, by transferring it into another court, failed entirely. In the dilemma in which he was now placed, he tried another means of escape. Calling together the council and the people, he announced that neither he nor Herod had found any fault in Jesus, such as should subject Him to death. He proposed therefore to chastise Him, and then, in accordance with custom,<sup>1</sup> release Him. In this way Pilate thought to satisfy all parties—"the people by releasing Him, the priests and elders by chastising Him, and himself, by delivering Him from death."<sup>2</sup> But Pilate failed again. Nothing would content the rulers but the carrying out of their sentence. And the people, excited against our Lord by the charge of blasphemy brought against Him, joined frantically in the cry, "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate made two more efforts to deliver Jesus. But he who had proposed, in order to please the Jews, to do violence to his Roman sense of justice by scourging Jesus, was no match for the clamorous populace and their rulers. The sense of his own miserably guilty life made a coward of him. He gave way. He "gave sentence that it should be as they required," and "delivered Jesus to their will."<sup>3</sup> He was led away to be crucified. Too weak to carry His cross, according to the custom, it was laid upon the shoulders of Simon the Cyrenian. This man belonged to the Jewish colony at the important city of Cyrene in Northern

<sup>1</sup> Verse 17 is omitted in R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Andrews.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke records the release of Barabbas, but in horror, as it would seem, at the deed, recoils from again mentioning his name. See ver. 25.



Africa, and had doubtless come to Jerusalem for the feast.<sup>1</sup>

**The Daughters of Jerusalem** (xxiii. 27-32).

This remarkable and affecting incident is recorded by St. Luke alone. Pity, for what He knew was coming upon many of these poor sympathizing women, wrung the words from the suffering and weakened<sup>2</sup> Lord. The days of Jerusalem's siege and destruction would be terrible days. Many of these women would live to witness its horrors. And so would their children. Then the blessedness of motherhood would be reversed. Then to escape the calamities of those days, the sufferers would pray for relief, even if it should come in the form of being crushed to death by the rocks and stones. What they were witnessing was sad enough, but "if such was the beginning of sorrows, what would the end be?"<sup>3</sup>

To the women, doubtless, the sadness of the spectacle was increased by the leading of two other condemned persons to death, with Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

**The Crucifixion** (xxiii. 33-49). St. Luke, writing for Gentiles, translates the Hebrew name of the place of crucifixion into its Latin equivalent, "Calvary."<sup>5</sup>

While the soldiers, who had charge of our Lord, were nailing Him to the cross, He prayed for them, and as we may believe, for the deluded Jewish people as well, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Cyrenian Jews had a synagogue of their own at Jerusalem. Acts ii. 10, vi. 9, xi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> The tradition is that He fell, fainting, under the weight of the cross.

<sup>3</sup> On the meaning of the proverb quoted by our Lord, see note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> The mention of the thieves at this point in the narrative is peculiar to St. Luke.

<sup>5</sup> It was probably a low, rounded hill.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Acts iii. 17; vii. 60; 1 Cor. ii. 8.



also 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7.

\* See Psal. xxxi. 5. This, the last word from the cross, is preserved by St. Luke alone. He has recorded three out of the seven words.



surely to us in the preciousness of God's word to the soul in the hour of death.

In relating the effect on the bystanders of our Lord's death, and of the prodigies accompanying it, St. Luke says that the centurion "glorified God,"<sup>1</sup> and specially mentions the signs of repentance exhibited by the people, for their share in the judicial murder which had been committed.<sup>2</sup>

**The Burial** (xxiii. 50-56). But though our Lord had suffered with the malefactors, His sacred body was not to be thrown into their unhallowed grave. Joseph's new tomb received it, and there it was placed with reverent hands, tenderly, and with such brief preparations and anointing as time and circumstances allowed. The women who had followed Him from Galilee looked on, and marking where the body was laid, returned to the city and prepared spices and ointments; intending, when the sabbath rest should be over, to hasten back and complete that embalmment, which now was the only way in which they could show their love and reverence to their crucified Lord.

<sup>1</sup> The expression of the centurion, "Certainly this was a righteous man" may be regarded as a Gentile equivalent for the more Hebraistic form preserved by St. Matthew and St. Mark, "Truly this was the Son of God." But after hearing, as he had done, the prayers of our Lord to His Father, the centurion may very well have used both expressions, one after the other.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 48.



## NOTES.

## A. The Four Accounts of the Institution of the Holy Communion.

A comparison of the four accounts of the Institution of the Holy Communion will be instructive and very helpful.

St. Matthew xvi. 26-28.	St. Mark xiv. 22-24.	St. Luke xxii. 19, 20.	St. Paul i Cor. xi. 23-25.
<p>26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.</p> <p>27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.</p> <p>28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</p> <p>ver. 28. For "New Testament," R.V. has "Covenant," with "Testament" in margin.</p> <p>Instead of "for the remission," R.V. has "unto," etc.</p>	<p>22 ¶ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread and blessed, and gave it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.</p> <p>23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they drank all of it.</p> <p>This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.</p> <p>ver. 24. See on Matt. xvi. 28.</p>	<p>after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.</p> <p>ver. 20. For "This cup," etc., R.V. has "This cup is the new covenant" in my blood, <del>even</del> that which is poured out for you."</p> <p>"Testament," margin.</p>	<p>23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:</p> <p>cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.</p> <p>ver. 24. R.V. omits "broken."</p> <p>ver. 25. "New Testament;" in R.V., "New Covenant."</p> <p>"Testament," margin.</p>



**B. On the Meaning of Luke ~~xxiii.~~ 31.**

The meaning of this proverb is obscure. It has been understood as follows :—

1. If this cruelty which is being exhibited towards Me is but the beginning of the sorrows of the nation, what may the end be expected to be? This interpretation is adopted above.

2. If the Gentiles and your rulers act in this way to Me, who am guiltless, what may be expected to be their fate? The Revisers of 1611 appear to have adopted this explanation, for they refer to 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18, where the thought is the same.

3. "The tree of the nation's life is still green. If, with all its leaves of profession still on it, it can witness and bear a part in the cruelties, which you are now bewailing, what may it be expected to suffer itself when blighting and mildew shall have entirely seized upon it, and its fair leaves all dropped away?" With this interpretation we may compare Ezek. xx. 47.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### The Risen Lord.

THE VISION OF ANGELS—THE WALK TO EMMAUS—  
APPEARANCE TO THE ELEVEN—SUMMARY OF  
THE FORTY DAYS—THE ASCENSION.

**THE** Women Visit the Sepulchre, and see a Vision of Angels (xxiv. 1-11). The Sabbath day, succeeding our Lord's death, was spent in rest and retirement by the faithful women. Some of them had hurriedly prepared spices and ointments for embalming the body, late on the Friday afternoon. Others did so, as soon as the Saturday evening came, and the Sabbath was past.<sup>1</sup> In a body,<sup>2</sup> they hastened in the early morning of Sunday, to perform the last offices of devotion to the Body of the Lord. But when they reached the sepulchre, they found its stone door rolled away, and the tomb empty. They were utterly at a loss to account for what had happened. The explanation was, however, close at hand. They learnt it from two angels, who appeared to them. It was not possible for Him to have been holden by death, for He had

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark xvi. 1, R.V.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke mentions Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, as forming one of this group of women. He seems to have had special sources of information respecting Herod. Cf. viii. 3; xxiii. 8-12.



"life in Himself."<sup>1</sup> The Lord had risen. To confirm their statement, the angels, showing that they knew well what Jesus had said and taught, reminded the women of the Lord's own words, that He should rise again on the third day. Cheered with these words, the women carried back the news to the Apostles and others. But their report obtained no credence. So entire was the despondency which had fallen upon the Eleven, that the women's "words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

**St. Peter's Visit to the Tomb** (xxiv. 12). One of the Eleven, Peter,<sup>2</sup> however, in contrast to the supineness of his brethren, determined to test the truth of the women's report. It was fully corroborated, and Peter returned home, "wondering at that which had come to pass."

**The Walk to Emmaus** (xxiv. 13-35). Each of the incidents, preserved to us, of the first Easter Day, has its own beauty and interest : this one, of the walk to Emmaus, certainly as much as any of the others. Though St. Mark briefly alludes to it,<sup>3</sup> the details are given by St. Luke alone.

Two of the general company of the disciples<sup>4</sup> were on their way to pay a short visit to the village of Emmaus, some seven miles to the north of Jerusalem. They were joined on their way by a stranger, who

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts ii. 24 ; John v. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Accompanied by St. John. See John xx. 2-9, where this incident is more fully recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xvi. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Evidently they were not Apostles. One of them was Cleopas (not the same name as Cleophas, or Clopas, of John xix. 25), of whom we know nothing further ; the other has been supposed to have been St. Luke himself. We can only say, of such a supposition, that it is not an impossible one.



interrupted their earnest, serious conversation, by inquiring as to what made them look so sad. They did not recognize their companion. "Their eyes were holden,<sup>1</sup> that they should not know Him." He was the risen Lord. The sympathy which He offered them was not rejected, although they were surprised, after all that had so lately happened, that any one should be ignorant of the cause of their sorrow. They eagerly explained, that their hopes for the Redemption of their nation had been cruelly crushed by the crucifixion of "Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in deed and in word." True, the Lord's own words as to His resurrection on the third day, dwelt in their minds,<sup>2</sup> and a report of it had been circulated by certain women of their company. But to this they attached little credit.

In common with the rest of their countrymen, these two, whilst diligently appropriating to the Messiah all those parts of their sacred Scriptures which spoke of His glory and triumph, were blind to all that the same Scriptures said of Messiah's sufferings and death. There was a veil upon their hearts.<sup>3</sup> This veil Jesus Christ now took away from the hearts of these two, as afterwards from the hearts of the Eleven.<sup>4</sup> Going through the Old Testament Scriptures, and pointing out the significance of each promise, and type and prophecy.<sup>5</sup> He showed them how it was only through suffering and death that the Messiah could enter into His glory.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John xx. 15; xxi. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. xxvii. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. iii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Verses 45-47.

<sup>5</sup> Some of the more prominent of these will be found in Gen. iii. 15; xxii. 18; Exod. xii.; Lev. xvi.; Numb. xx. 11; xxi. 9; xxiv. 17; Deut. xviii. 15; Psal. xxii.; Isa. ix. 6, 7; xl. 10, 11; l. 6; lii. 13; liii. 12; liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 14, 15; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Mic. v. 2; Zech. vi. 12; ix. 9; xii. 10; xiii. 7; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 2, etc.



Arrived at Emmaus the two disciples constrained their companion to be their guest. They sat down to meat, and Jesus, assuming at once the place of Master, by taking the bread and blessing it, was immediately recognized by them. The recognition, however, was the signal for His disappearance. *How* this was, we cannot tell. All the Lord's comings and doings during the forty days were alike mysterious. They "seem to show, that a change had already begun to come over Him, though He was not yet fully glorified."<sup>1</sup>

With their hearts still burning within them, the two arose in eager haste, and, despite the lateness of the hour,<sup>2</sup> returned to Jerusalem, and announced to the Eleven how the Lord had opened to them the Scriptures, and had been known to them "in the breaking of bread."

**Appearance to the Eleven** (xxiv. 36-43). The Eleven, too, had their story to tell as well. There was no doubt about it. The Lord had indeed risen, and had appeared to one of their own number, and that one, Simon, who had denied Him.<sup>3</sup>

The conversation was still proceeding, when Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you. To convince them of his identity, He pointed to the nail prints in His hands and feet, and, adding proof to proof, took food and ate before them.

**Summary of the Forty Days** (xxiv. 44-49). St. Luke adds a brief account of our Lord's teaching, commands and promises during the period between

<sup>1</sup> The process of glorification seems to have been gradual. See vv. 39-43.

<sup>2</sup> It was about sunset, about 6.30 o'clock.

<sup>3</sup> St. Mark's brief narrative implies that there was some hesitancy in accepting the story of the two (xvi. 13).



His Resurrection and Ascension. We should note especially how in the expression, "While I was yet with you," He seems to have been weaning them from any dependence upon His continued bodily presence. With them He was, and ever would be, but not as He had been before His crucifixion. As before His death, He had said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified," so now, He speaks as if His departure to the Father were already accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

**The Ascension** (xxiv. 50-53). The forty days came to an end.<sup>2</sup> Only the final leave-taking remained. How touchingly beautiful is the account. On the Mount of Olives, close to Bethany, He was parted from them. He was in the act of blessing them, and through them all the faithful, when "He was carried up into heaven." That leave-taking was only one of sight, not of faith. And therefore, instead of sorrow, there was great joy. They knew He had gone to prepare a place for them. They knew He would come again, and take them unto Himself. Meanwhile, where could they better be than "continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John xiii. 33; xiv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> We learn the exact interval from the Acts.

<sup>3</sup> The ascension is only actually mentioned by St. Mark (xvi. 19) and St. Luke (xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9-11). But it is alluded to, or implied in John i. 51; iii. 13; vi. 62; xx. 17; Acts ii. 33; iii. 21; vii. 55; Eph. iv. 9, 10; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. v.-x.; Rev. i.-v.



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## *CHAPTER XXXVII.*

### **St. John and the Characteristics of his Gospel.**

**ST. JOHN** was one of the Twelve Apostles, and, as is usually supposed, the youngest of the number. There was something in his character specially attractive to our Lord, for he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." St. John's parents were Zebedee and Salome. His father was a master-fisherman of the Lake of Galilee, employing hired servants to assist him. His two sons, James and John, followed their father's occupation, and it was whilst they were engaged in the work of their craft that they received the call, "Follow Me." Salome, the mother of St. John and his brother St. James, was a devoted adherent of Jesus Christ;<sup>1</sup> but at the same time a woman, apparently of high ambition for her sons.<sup>2</sup>

St. John seems to have been a true Galilean, hardy, impetuous, fiery. The preaching of the Baptist attracted him, and he became one of his disciples. This discipleship, however, he soon exchanged for a higher one, that of the Lord Himself.<sup>3</sup>

For a time, St. John appears to have returned to his occupation of a fisherman. But after a while, he

<sup>1</sup> Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xx. 20.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 35-42. We assume the truth of the ordinary interpretation that the unnamed disciple was St. John.



received a decisive call from the Lord to follow Him. From this time he became, with his brother James, a member of the chosen band of twelve, and, in company with James and his friend Peter, one of the three who formed, during our Lord's ministry, an inner group amongst the twelve. To those three was permitted, as it would seem, a nearer relationship to the Lord, than was allowed to the others. They only of the twelve saw the raising of Jairus's daughter, and the glories of the transfiguration, and were witnesses of the agony in Gethsemane. To them also, in company with Andrew, did our Lord deliver the great discourse on the Mount of Olives about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world.<sup>1</sup>

St. John, and his brother St. James, were surnamed "Boanerges" by Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> a word meaning "sons of thunder." It is generally supposed that this name had reference to the sturdiness of their character, the decisiveness of their action, and perhaps, at least at times, the fierceness of their partisanship. These characteristics were more or less shown on three occasions mentioned in the Gospels. In their zeal for their Master, they forbade the man who cast out devils in Christ's name, but would not follow them,<sup>3</sup> and they proposed to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who would not receive the Lord.<sup>4</sup> The third occasion is equally significant. Putting their mother forward to speak for them, they requested for themselves the two chief places in what they thought would be the now quickly established kingdom of the Master.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. ; Mark xiii. ; Luke xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Mark iii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Mark ix. 38 ; Luke ix. 49. Cf. Numb. xi. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ix. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xx. 20 ; Mark x. 35.



As the time drew near for the "glorifying of the Son of Man,"<sup>1</sup> St. John was selected by Jesus Christ, to prepare, in company with St. Peter, the Last Supper.<sup>2</sup> At the supper, prompted by St. Peter, he asked Jesus, "who was to be the traitor." Later on, after the betrayal, he, through his acquaintance with the High Priest, gained admittance for himself and St. Peter into the courtyard of Caiaphas's palace.<sup>3</sup> He must have been a keen spectator of the trial of our Lord, for He gives its history in much more detail than do his brother Evangelists. During the crucifixion of his Master, he stood beside the Cross, and received into his charge from the Lord, the Lord's Mother.<sup>4</sup>

The eager nature of St. John is again shown in his quick running to the Holy Sepulchre at the news of the resurrection. Yet with all his eagerness, there was a tenderness and delicacy of feeling which made him shrink at first from too close an inspection of the grave. It was not till his friend Peter had set the example, that St. John went into the sepulchre, "and he saw, and believed."<sup>5</sup> At the second miraculous draught of fishes, St. John, who describes himself under the title of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," was the first to recognize "the Lord" in the stranger standing on the lake shore.<sup>6</sup>

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. John appears on one or two occasions, in company with St. Peter, but he never assumed the lead. After his visit to Samaria,<sup>7</sup> we read no more of him, although no doubt he was present at the Council of Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> John xviii. 15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> John xix. 26, 27.

<sup>5</sup> John xx. 2-10.

<sup>6</sup> John xxi. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Acts iii., iv., viii. 14-25.

<sup>8</sup> In his Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul mentions two visits he paid to Jerusalem, one, three years after his conversion, when St. John seems



The only other notice we have of the Apostle is in the Revelation, where he tells us that he was banished to the Isle of Patmos, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Of the traditions respecting St. John, the one which assigns Ephesus to him as his place of residence during his latter years, may be accepted as true, and it may also be regarded as certain that he lived to a very advanced age, dying somewhere about the year A.D. 100.

**Characteristics of St. John's Gospel.** Our Lord's teaching during the short period of His ministry, may be divided into two distinct branches, having reference to the two most important matters on which it was His object to instruct His disciples and mankind. These were—

First, the nature of the kingdom He was about to set up in the world.

Secondly, the deeper and more difficult doctrines relating to His own Person, and His work of redemption.

The former of these is dwelt upon, more especially, in the Gospels of the first three Evangelists; the latter in that of St. John.

Each Gospel doubtless portrays our Lord, more or less, in *all* His several offices and aspects, and attests His Godhead; but in each separately a distinctive prominence is given to *one* special view of Him in His office and ministry.

The differences of the three earlier Gospels may probably be traced to their being addressed primarily

to have been absent (Gal. i. 18, 19), and the other, some years after, when St. John was present (ii. 9). This second visit is to be identified with that of Acts xv. See further, LIGHTFOOT, *Epistle to Galatians*, p. 109.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. i. 9.



to three distinct groups of Christian Churches, the Jewish and Roman Churches, and the Greek Churches founded by St. Paul.

In the three earlier Gospels, the *human* aspects of Christ are more particularly set before us. In the first He is especially the Messiah and King of Israel, in the second the Servant or Minister of God, in the third the perfect or ideal Man, the Friend and Redeemer of all men. The fourth Gospel, on the other hand, teaches especially about the Divine Nature of our Blessed Lord, as "the only begotten Son of God," Who is the Light of the World. Throughout his Gospel, St. John makes our Lord known to us from this high point of view.

St. John himself tells us the objects with which he wrote his Gospel. "These are written," he says, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."<sup>1</sup> St. John, in fact, did not intend to write a full account of our Lord's life, but only to make such a selection from the abundant materials at his command as should induce (1) a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, (2) in Jesus as the Son of God, and so (3) to procure for the reader the highest gift, "life through His Name." These three objects can all be distinctly traced through the Gospel.

St. John wrote besides for a later generation,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 31.

<sup>2</sup> St. John wrote his Gospel (in Greek) certainly after St. Paul's death in A.D. 68, and many years, probably, after the three earlier, or synoptic Gospels, were written. The interval between St. Paul's death and the end of the century is known in common history as the age of the Roman Emperors Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, of the historians Suetonius and Tacitus, of Pliny the Younger, and of the poets Martial, Statius and Juvenal. St. John wrote therefore in a period of great literary activity, in the broad daylight of the Roman Empire.



already instructed in the leading facts of Christianity, as detailed in the oral teaching of the time, or narrated by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. In no other way can we account for the silence of the fourth Gospel about such events as the Transfiguration, the institution of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, and the Ascension.

When St. John wrote, heresies were rife. The simple belief of the first Christians had become clouded by the refinements of Greek philosophy, or was in danger from false brethren or leaders of sects ; some teaching that the Divine *Logos* (or Word) only descended upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him again before His crucifixion, others that His whole human nature was simply a shadow and delusion ; thus striking at the very root of the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement.

By fully setting forth the Godhead of Christ, St. John undoubtedly intended to refute these heresies. Accordingly, while his narrative of the *human* life of Christ begins only at John the Baptist's witness to our Lord's Messiahship, the Apostle shows Him to us pre-existing in heaven as the Divine Word Which was "in the beginning with God and was God ;" "and," he adds, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

Not only the first chapter, however, but the whole Gospel, bears the same testimony ; and our Lord's own repeated declarations of oneness with the Father, recorded by St. John, are *plain* and emphatic.

To take a few instances : "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also ;" "I and My Father are One ;" "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that *the Son of God* might be



glorified thereby ;" " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ;" " All things that the Father hath are Mine."<sup>1</sup>

It is to St. John's Gospel that we turn for our Lord's promises in reference to the nature and mission of the Holy Spirit to which the other Gospels contain only a few allusions. To Nicodemus, to the woman of Samaria, to the people at the Feast of Tabernacles, to the disciples, especially in His last sublime discourse, does our Lord speak of the convincing, enlightening, sanctifying, comforting influences of the Holy Ghost. This record of Christ's own words on so great and important a theme is of itself sufficient to stamp a separate and peculiar character on the fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

It is the Lord Himself Who will send the Holy Ghost, and it is He Whom the Holy Ghost shall glorify:—" If any man thirst" (saith our Lord), " let him come unto *Me* and drink ;" " The Holy Ghost Whom the Father will send in *My* Name ;" " I will send Him unto you ;" " He shall glorify *Me* ;" " Receive ye the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup>

We may further cite a few of our Lord's own sayings that directly or indirectly imply His Godhead : " I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die ;" " Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee ;" " This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent ;" " O Father, glorify Thou Me

<sup>1</sup> See John viii. 19, x. 30, xi. 4, xiv. 9, xvi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See John iii., iv., vii. 37-39, xiv.-xvi.

<sup>3</sup> See John vii. 37, xiv. 26, xvi. 7, 14, xx. 22.



with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was ;" " All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them." <sup>1</sup>

Thus did our Lord claim for Himself equality with the Father. By Him the dead are raised, and He giveth eternal life to those who believe on Him. The glory of the Eternal God is His glory. He possesses all things in common with the Father. The Jews contemptuously rejected our Lord's claim to be anything more than the prophet of Nazareth. Some said, He was " a good man," while others called him " a deceiver of the people." But they all understood His words about Himself to have but one meaning—the making Himself equal with God. " Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God ;" " For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy ; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." <sup>2</sup>

How strenuously did the Apostles ever reject all honour, homage or worship ! How careful were they to assure the people that they were men of like passions with themselves, and that the grace of God alone made them to differ from others ! But neither when the Jews sought to stone our Lord because He made Himself equal with God, nor afterwards, when accused of the same thing, did He repel the charge or say that they accused Him falsely. He is " the Bread from heaven ;" He is " the Light of the World ;" He is the " Door," and " the Good Shepherd " Who gives to the sheep " eternal life." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See John xi. 25, 26, xvii. i. 3, 5, 10.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 18, x. 33.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 41, viii. 12, x. 9, 11.



St. John's Gospel is, then, the Gospel of doctrine. It is the treasury of our Lord's words, of which, indeed, it mainly consists. In it He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man Which is in heaven,<sup>1</sup> declares unto us the Father ; and " here, in the stillness of our hearts, as we read these heavenly discourses, we seem to feel the Son of Man speaking to us as a man speaketh with his friend." <sup>2</sup>

The difference between the earlier Gospels and the latest are nearly as great in the narrative as in the doctrinal portions. We have seen that one reason why St. John so carefully records our Lord's conversations about His Person and work was, probably, because they demonstrate His Divinity. Those portions therefore of our Lord's ministry, in Judæa, Jerusalem, or Bethany, especially, which gave rise to these discourses are naturally given in connection with them. Accordingly, while St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke occupy themselves almost entirely with the Galilean and Peræan ministry, and until the closing week pass over the Judæan ministry almost in silence, St. John dwells, for the most part, upon the latter, which besides would be new to his readers, who were already familiar with the Galilean Gospels or their substance. St. John omits our Lord's parables altogether, and he mentions only two of the miracles <sup>3</sup> already on record.

The fourth Gospel, again, differs from its predecessors almost as much in manner as in matter, in style as in story. Its author writes much as it might have been expected he would write in face of the dangers that beset the Church. He explains facts ; he enforces

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Ellicott.

<sup>3</sup> Feeding the five thousand, and the walking on the sea.



doctrines ; he speaks with all the authority of an aged Apostle ; while his fellow Evangelists give us each, without comment, a plain narrative of the facts of our Lord's ministry, and the simple teaching which He addressed to the peasants of Galilee.

**Origin of St. John's Gospel.** There is a tradition in reference to the origin of St. John's Gospel preserved by Eusebius, which, whether we accept it or not as fully authenticated, is at least an interesting anecdote of the primitive Church.

It is related that, " In reply to the entreaties of his fellow disciples and bishops, John said, ' Fast with me for three days from this time, and whatever shall be revealed to each of us, whether it be favourable to my writing or not, let us relate it to one another.' " On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, aided by the revision of all. What wonder is it then that John so constantly brings forward Gospel phrases, even in his Epistles, saying in his own person, ' What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written ' ? " <sup>1</sup>

**Authenticity of the Gospel.** The Gospel of St. John has been received by the Church as authentic from the very earliest times. Justin Martyr, who was born about A.D. 89, before the death of St. John, quotes from it, and the Fathers of the second, third and fourth centuries, to say nothing of the testimony of heretics, refer to it as the genuine production of the Apostle. And certainly no book of Scripture was ever possessed of more conclusive internal evidence ; for

<sup>1</sup> Professor Westcott, quoted in ARCHDEACON NORRIS'S *Key to the Gospels*, p. 7.



it would require all the credulity of the wildest scepticism to believe that any uninspired writer could compose the sublime discourses that speak to us from the pages of the fourth Evangelist.

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NOTE.

**On the Authenticity of St. John's Gospel.**

Credner, a critic whose rationalistic tendencies would not lead him to take too partial a view of such a matter, remarks: "If we were without any historical data whatever as to the authorship of the fourth Gospel, we should on internal grounds,—from the freshness and vividness of the narrative, the preciseness and minuteness of the details, the peculiar mention made of the Baptist and of the son of Zebedee, the inspiration of love and devotedness which the writer evinces towards Jesus, the irresistible charm that pervades the whole evangelical history,—have been led to the conclusion that the writer could only have been a native of Palestine, an immediate eye-witness, an apostle, a favourite of Jesus, could only, in a word, have been John."

Lachmann says that for his part he has left off reading works against the genuineness and historical character of St. John's Gospel, for he knows beforehand that they are worthless.—*The Foundations of our Faith.*



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### The Manifestation of the Word.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE GOSPEL—TESTIMONY  
OF THE BAPTIST—NATHANAEL—MARRIAGE AT  
CANA.

**ST. JOHN'S** prologue to his Gospel; the **Manifestation of the Word of God** (i. 1.-18). To establish the Church in the truth, and to put the disturbers of her peace to silence, St. John begins his Gospel with a statement of the grand and blessed doctrine, that her Lord is the Eternal Word Who was in the beginning with God—that He is God; and just as the *words* of a man reveal his thoughts, so the Divine *Word* makes the Father known to men. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him.*" "All things," saith our Lord, "that I have heard of My Father *I have made known unto you.*"<sup>1</sup> Thus "Christ," it has been said, "is the expression of the mind of God."

The opening of St. John's Gospel reminds us in structure and style of the opening of the Book of Genesis. Both Moses and St. John speak of "The beginning," as "the initial moment of time and creation." But whilst Moses treats it as the starting-

<sup>1</sup> John i. 18, xv. 15.



point *from* which to commence his record of God's work in regard to the world, St. John dwells on That which was *before* the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." The Word existed, St. John means, before time began. Everything in creation received its being and life from Him, for "in Him was life."<sup>1</sup> And because He was life, and because He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and made him in the image of God, a rational and responsible being, therefore the Word was to man, what He was not to the beasts, "the Light," kindling within him that light of conscience, which made him "a law unto himself."<sup>2</sup>

Nor did the Light cease to shine, although by the Fall, the darkness of separation from God drew down upon men, and would, had it been possible, have completely separated the creature from the Creator. But "the Light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not."<sup>3</sup>

St. John's Gospel is the only one of the four which contains the remarkable title, "the only-begotten Son of God." It occurs twice in this chapter, and twice in the third chapter. In the latter it is applied by our Lord to Himself.<sup>4</sup> It sets forth both the eternal generation and the personal Being of the Son of God.

The same verse contains the announcement of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John v. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Such is the meaning of ver. 5. So R.V. margin. The rendering of A.V. seems to have been taken from the Vulgate. The thought of the Apostle is not that the darkness did not "understand" the light, but that it did not overwhelm it. Cf. John xii. 35, 1 Thess. v. 4, where the same Greek word occurs. In both these places R.V. has "overtake." In ver. 5 it has "apprehend," a kind of compromise between the two meanings.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Psa. lxxxix. 27; Col. i. 15; 1 John iv. 9.



**Mystery of the Incarnation.** It answers to the declarations already made of the Godhead, eternal and divine, of the Word. "The Word was God," and "The Word became flesh ;" "He was with God," and "He dwelt, or tabernacled, among us ;" "He was in the beginning," and "We beheld His glory." The Word was the Child of the Virgin Mary. "Without any diminution of the Divine Nature, though for a time He laid aside some of its attributes,<sup>1</sup> the Word took Human Nature, body, soul, and spirit, and became flesh."<sup>2</sup> And in the days of His flesh, He revealed God the Father to men, for the glory which they beheld was "as of the only-begotten of the Father."

To the pre-existence, as well as to the Incarnation of the Word, John the Baptist, the Apostle tells us, also bare witness. This is by way of parenthesis. The Apostle then recurs to the thought of the fulness of grace and truth, of which he has already spoken. We have all, he says, received of that fulness, ever fresh stores of grace, according to our several needs. The Law, though a divine gift, could not do this for us. It was only through Jesus Christ that "grace and truth came." And why? Because only in Jesus Christ could man have knowledge of God. He only shares both the divine and human natures. He only has seen God: and He alone can declare Him to man.

**The Testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus Christ** (i. 19-36). The testimony of the Baptist to the Divinity of Christ is recorded more fully by St. John than by his fellow Evangelists. It is interesting to trace in this the fulfilment of the Apostle's object, in writing his Gospel, to which we have already alluded.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Archdeacon Norris.



The witness of the Baptist to our Lord, as given by St. John, is distinct and striking. The witness was given on more than one occasion. To the deputation sent to him by the Sanhedrin, the Baptist spoke of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ,<sup>1</sup> and later on, in quieting a dispute between his disciples and the Jews, he told them of the union betwixt Christ and the Church, and declared that Jesus came from above, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to Him in unmeasured supply; that He is the Son of God, and Lord of all, and that to have faith in Him is to have everlasting life.<sup>2</sup>

To his own disciples John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and explained to them the revelation which had been made to him at our Lord's baptism of the Divine Sonship of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

The object of the Baptist's ministry, as the herald and forerunner of the Messiah, was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. In the prosecution of his purpose, he announced the coming of the Messiah, and called the whole Jewish nation to repentance. As a type of that cleansing of heart and life which they needed, he baptized in Jordan as many as confessed their sins and promised amendment of life.

Great multitudes from all classes<sup>4</sup> came to John's baptism, but they who embraced his teaching and were baptized were chiefly from the humbler classes.<sup>5</sup> No national repentance followed. It was only for a

<sup>1</sup> John i. 15, 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 25-36. It is thought by some (e.g. Professor Westcott in *Speaker's Commentary*) that verses 31-36 are not the Baptist's words, but a commentary of the Evangelist upon them.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 29-34.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. iii. 7; John v. 32, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Luke vii. 29.



time that the rulers resorted to his teaching. They rejected him as the messenger and prophet of God, and would not accept baptism at his hands. It seems probable that they sought for some ground of accusation against John. If so, they failed in their design. Nothing perhaps in the Baptist's whole career is more wonderful than the patience, humility and faithfulness with which he answered their worrying questions. He not only made no attempt to assert himself, but he denied also, in the most emphatic way, that he was either the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet of whom Moses had spoken. He looked forward to no great distinctions, he made no claim to leadership. He was but a voice, and when He of whom he spoke began His ministry, that voice would die away into silence. "He must increase, but I must decrease."<sup>1</sup>

**Andrew and John with Jesus Christ** (i. 37-42). The first interview of the Baptist with his questioners took place at Bethabara<sup>2</sup> in Peræa, during the later stage of his ministry, after he had left the wilderness of Judæa, and had retired "beyond Jordan."<sup>3</sup> It was the day after this, when Jesus was returning from His temptation in the wilderness, that John pointed Him out to his disciples as "the Lamb of God." Their thoughts would thus be carried back to the sacrifice of Isaac, and to the Paschal Lamb.

The Baptist repeated his testimony on the following day, in the presence of two of his disciples, one of whom was Andrew, and the other, it has always been supposed, was St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist, who never mentions his own name. The two followed

<sup>1</sup> John i. 19-28; iii. 30. Cf. Deut. xviii. 15-18.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. iii. 1. Cf. John iii. 23, and x. 40.



Jesus, and were invited by Him to what was doubtless a lengthened conversation.<sup>1</sup> The effect upon them was wonderful. They felt that they had found the long-expected Messiah. They hastened to spread the good news. Their natural impulse was to find their own brothers, and to tell them. This they did. Simon was the first found,<sup>2</sup> and to him, when brought by Andrew to Jesus, the Lord gave a new name, significant of the character and future importance of the new disciple, and of his call to a higher life. The name was Cephas. It signifies "a stone" in the Aramaic, or vernacular Hebrew, spoken in the time of our Lord. Its Greek equivalent was "Peter."

**Philip and Nathanael with Jesus Christ** (i. 43-51). The hour had not yet come for any manifestation of Himself in Judæa. The Lord, therefore, on the day after the last incident, determined to set out for Galilee. Either before He started, or immediately after, Jesus called another to follow Him. This other was Philip. He had probably been prepared in part for the call by Andrew and Peter, of whose city<sup>3</sup> he was a native, and with whom he was doubtless on intimate terms. Philip obeyed, and at once found<sup>4</sup> his friend Nathanael of Cana,<sup>5</sup> to whom

<sup>1</sup> St. John says, "They abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. St. John's reckoning of time is doubtful. Some think that he uses the Jewish mode, from sunset to sunset, in which case the hour would be four o'clock in the afternoon. Others are of opinion that the reckoning used is the Roman, the same as our own, from midnight to midnight. In this case, the time would be ten o'clock in the morning.

<sup>2</sup> The narrative leads us to suppose that both the disciples started to find their brothers, and that Andrew was the first successful.

<sup>3</sup> Bethsaida of Galilee. The name "Philip" is Greek. Cf. John xii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The word "findeth" in verses 41, 43, and 45, implies not an accidental finding, but a finding after a search.

<sup>5</sup> Usually identified with Bartholomew. For (1) the other disciples



he imparted the good news. Nathanael, remembering doubtless the proverb, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," doubted whether the Messiah could have sprung from so obscure a place as Nazareth, which was not even mentioned in the Old Testament. But he was soon convinced that Philip was right. The Lord knew his heart, and what he had been doing. Nathanael at once acknowledged Jesus to be "the Son of God, the King of Israel," the Messiah. Our Lord's reply to him is very remarkable. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." The prophet Isaiah had already familiarized the Jews with the metaphor of the opened heavens, as symbolizing free intercourse between God and man;<sup>1</sup> the vision of Jacob<sup>2</sup> supplied our Lord with the imagery He needed; and the title of "Son of Man," applied long before to the Messiah by Daniel the prophet, was claimed by Jesus as His own, and used to explain that the ladder which Jacob had seen, was Christ Himself, the God-man. To Jacob it had been but a dream. To Nathanael and all believers it was henceforth to be a reality. By recording the use of this title by our Lord, St. John completes "the revelation of Christ's Person, which has been unfolded step by step in the narrative of this first chapter, in which He has been acknowledged as the Greater Successor of the Baptist, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of Israel. These titles had been given by others." This one was a new title, applied here mentioned were afterwards Apostles, (2) Nathanael is grouped with the Apostles in chapter xxi. 2; (3) in three of the four lists Philip and Bartholomew are grouped together, and (4) Bartholomew is a patronymic, implying another name.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxiv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxviii. 12.



by our Lord to Himself, and only used by Him.<sup>1</sup> It expresses the real manhood of Jesus Christ, and His relation to the whole human race, as its representative.<sup>2</sup>

**Manifestation in Galilee:** *The Marriage at Cana* (ii. 1-11). The claims of Jesus to be the Messiah had now been recognized by several persons. The testimony of the Baptist, and their own experience, had sufficed for this. The Evangelist now proceeds to tell us how the glory which, although veiled, had been acknowledged, was manifested forth. And first in the circle of domestic life.

On the third day from the call of Nathanael, the Lord arrived with His disciples at Cana of Galilee.<sup>3</sup> A marriage feast was going on. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there; and it seems probable, as an ancient tradition affirms, that the wedding feast was at the house of a relative of hers. Hence, it has been thought, her anxiety about the failure of the wine, occasioned perhaps by the influx of more guests than had been expected, and her desire to replenish it, resulting in her appeal to Jesus, "They have no wine," and her commands to the servants.

At first sight, our Lord's reply to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee," appears strange and harsh. But the word rendered "woman"

<sup>1</sup> With one exception, Acts vii. 56. Cf. Rev. i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47, where St. Paul supplies a commentary upon this title. Cf. Rom. v. 14. See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The site of Cana is not absolutely certain. Lieutenant Conder, of the Palestine Survey, says that the Crusaders evidently believed Khurbet Kanah (Kana-el-Jelil), to the north of Nazareth, to be the place. The traditional site is at Kefr Kenna, four and a half miles north-east of Nazareth. Of these, he says, "the comparative claims may thus be summed up. Khurbet Kanah approaches nearest in name, Kefr Kenna is in the most suitable position."—*Tent Work in Palestine*, i. 153.



was a title of respect, by which royal and noble ladies were addressed, and was the very one by which Jesus addressed His mother when, hanging on the cross, He commended her to the care of St. John. There was, perhaps, something of reproof in the Lord's reply, by which, however, He may have meant nothing more than to set aside her suggestion. He needed not indeed that any should tell Him of a want of which He was already fully aware. When the hour came for acting, He would act. This, at least, His mother understood by His reply. Nor was she disappointed. In a little while, six water-pots of stone, containing some one hundred and twenty or more gallons in all, were filled with water. The servants knew it was water they put into those pots. But when they handed it to the guest, who had been chosen governor of the feast,<sup>1</sup> it was no longer water, it was wine, and better than any with which the bridegroom had as yet supplied them.

And so Jesus manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him. There was, we may believe, a symbolical meaning, in this our Lord's first exercise of superhuman power, for "the first miracle of Moses," it has been remarked,<sup>2</sup> "was a turning of water into blood ;<sup>3</sup> and this had its fitness ; for the law which came by Moses was a ministration of death, and working wrath.<sup>4</sup> But the first miracle of Christ was a turning of water into wine ; this, too, a meet inauguration of all that should follow, for His was a ministration of life ; He came, the dispenser of that true wine that maketh glad the heart of man.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eccles. xxxii. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. vii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Trench on the Miracles.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Psa. civ. 15.



## NOTES.

**A. On the reading "Bethabara" in John i. 28.**

"Bethany" is the reading of most of the MSS., and is adopted by R.V. It would be a village of that name on the east of Jordan, and not to be confounded with the Bethany near Jerusalem. A discovery, however, made during the recent survey of Palestine, of a ford of the Jordan, some fourteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee, bearing the name of "'Abārah," or "the ford" or "passage," has suggested the thought that, after all, the reading Bethabara, which is radically the same word, is the true reading. Or since "Bathania" was the name of Bashan in the time of our Lord, it may be that we should read "Bethabara in Bethany," the former being the village close to the ford, the latter the district in which it was situated. See CONDER'S *Tent Work in Palestine*, ii. 64-68.

**B. On John i. 51.**

The following explanation of our Lord's words is interesting and instructive : "Jacob's vision was given him at a time when his position as the chosen 'seed' seemed most doubtful, the fulfilment of God's promise most unlikely. He was an exile, hated and threatened by his brother. The vision assured him of God's care of him, and the certainty of the promise. The hosts of heaven were on *his* side : what need he fear from man's opposition? Jesus had just been acknowledged as the Messiah, the promised King, the Head of the true Israel. But His brethren after the flesh would as a whole reject and desire to kill Him. How would the disciples' faith stand this? The same comfort and support which Jacob had had they should have also. They should have visible proof that *heaven* was on His side, even when things were at their worst. Every miracle, every heavenly voice, every vision of angelic attendants, would come under this promise ; heaven was 'open' to them, and they would see on which side God was : 'angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' ; He was their care, because their Master."—G. WARRINGTON.



## *CHAPTER XXXIX.*

### **Further Manifestation of the Glory.**

THE TEMPLE CLEANSED—NICODEMUS—THE BAPTIST'S LAST TESTIMONY—THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA—THE NOBLEMAN OF CAPERNAUM.

**SHORT Visit to Capernaum** (ii. 12). At first, the Revelation of Jesus as the Messiah was to individuals, and in private life. The time was now come for a more open manifestation of Himself. St. John gives us three scenes in which that manifestation was made, in Judæa, Samaria, Galilee. The account is prefaced by a brief mention of a short visit to Capernaum. From the hill country of Cana, or Nazareth, the Lord went down to Capernaum, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, with His mother, brethren and disciples. Here, after a few days, they probably joined the caravan of pilgrims on their way to keep the Passover at Jerusalem.

**The Manifestation at Jerusalem : Cleansing the Temple** (ii. 13—iii. 22). The first act of Christ on His arrival at the Holy City was in strong contrast to the work at Cana. There He was the guest, ennobling everyday life with His kindness and sympathy ; here He was the uncompromising Reformer, purifying the worship of God in His Temple. This first cleansing



**A MAP  
Illustrating  
OUR LORD'S JOURNEYS  
IN  
THE HOLY LAND**

[illegible]



of the Temple is recorded only by St. John. In it, He fulfilled one note of the Messiah, coming suddenly to His Temple, and purifying the Sons of Levi.<sup>1</sup> From the obedience He exacted, and the awe He inspired, we may well believe that the cleansing was recognized, by those who saw it, as a fulfilment of the prophecy. Yet it was even more than this. It was a claim of Divine Sonship : "Make not My Father's house, a house of merchandize ;" and from this claim, the bystanders were left to infer that He was the Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

The fearlessness of our Lord's act, and the apparent forgetfulness of the danger in which He was placing Himself, produced a marked effect on the disciples. They certainly felt the effect of a Presence, the nature of which they, as yet, probably, did not understand. They were reminded of the Psalm,<sup>3</sup> which spoke of the holy zeal for the honour of God's House, which should animate and, as it were, consume, the Messiah.

The effect upon the rulers was of a different kind. They understood the act and the words as a claim to be the Messiah, and desired, accordingly, some proof that the claim was rightly made. What the Lord had done, single-handed, and simply with the Divine Majesty of His presence, ought to have been sufficient for them. But they demanded more,<sup>4</sup> asking for it, not in the spirit of an honest inquirer, but in that of

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iii. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> The scene of the cleansing was the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles, where there was a regular market. The sellers and the money changers were there for the convenience of country and foreign Jews, who could not bring the necessary animals, or the right money with them. But the business ought to have been conducted outside, and not within the sacred precincts. The scourge of small cords was rather for a symbol of authority than as a weapon of offence.

<sup>3</sup> Psa. lxi. 9. Cf. Rom. xv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John vi. 30; Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1



unbelief. Accordingly the answer only came in the form of a dark saying, which clear as it was to the disciples, and is to us, after His resurrection, was to the Jews entirely an enigma.<sup>1</sup> When Jesus told them to "Destroy this temple,"<sup>2</sup> they interpreted the words literally. But when the prophecy accompanying the words was fulfilled on Easter Day, His disciples remembered them, and understood that He had spoken of the temple of His body.<sup>3</sup>

**Continued work at Jerusalem** (ii. 23-25). The Temple was cleansed probably on the Eve of the Passover, when the leaven was put away from every house. Our Lord continued His work at Jerusalem during the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, if not for a short time longer. The result was that many believed on Him. But the belief was not to be trusted. It produced in the Lord an evident reserve of manner and teaching, the reason of which is explained by the Evangelist to have arisen from that intimate knowledge of men's hearts which was possessed by our Lord.<sup>4</sup>

**Discourse with Nicodemus** (iii. 1-21). The rulers of the Jews<sup>5</sup> were not willing to see the truth,

<sup>1</sup> We should note carefully the undesigned coincidence here between the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and that of St. John. The two earlier Evangelists tell us how these words were made the occasion of a false accusation against our Lord at His trial, but they do not tell us when or where Jesus had spoken them. St. John, on the other hand, records the words, but says nothing of the false accusation.

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The words translated "Temple," in vv. 14, 15, and in vv. 20, 21, are different. The word in the former verses is used for the whole sacred enclosure; the word in the latter of the actual sacred building. See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

<sup>4</sup> St. John saw that this knowledge accounted for certain decisive acts of Christ at critical moments. See e.g. John vi. 15.

<sup>5</sup> By the phrase "the Jews," St. John nearly always means the Rulers, or the members of the Sanhedrin.



and therefore it would have been useless to put it plainly before them. Doubtless, some amongst them were sincere and anxious inquirers. Such an one was Nicodemus. His coming to Jesus secretly and at night shows that, even at the very commencement of our Lord's ministry, the rulers entertained a hostile feeling towards Him, which ever deepened in intensity until it culminated in His judicial murder. Nicodemus, though wanting as yet in courage and faith, came to Christ, we may believe, with an honest desire for enlightenment. But he was a Pharisee, and had, as his opening words show, the pride of a Pharisee still in his heart. Whilst therefore our Lord condescended to enter into a lengthened discourse with him, He veiled His teaching in mystical language, which Nicodemus could not understand. And when he sought for further information, Jesus replied in words, which instead of making things plainer to His questioner, must have seemed more full of difficulty than ever.<sup>1</sup> The conversation, however, produced a lasting effect,<sup>2</sup> and doubtless, as Nicodemus grew in grace and humility, the wonderful discourse which had been addressed to him gradually unfolded itself to him, and the great truths of which the Lord had spoken became plain.

The discourse itself treated, as we know, of some of the deepest spiritual truths : of the necessity of the new birth of water and of the spirit, of redemption and eternal life through the incarnation of the Son of God, and His death upon the cross, of the love of the Father from which all had sprung. Even in these early days of His ministry, the end was always present to the Lord, and though on earth, He was still in heaven, ever in open vision, always seeing Him Who

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John vi.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 39.



is invisible. The incarnation was the coming of the Light into the world. But not all cared to come to it. None came, who did evil, and delighted in the hidden things of darkness. Only those came who did truth, and whose deeds bore witness of the heart and faith within.

**Manifestation in Samaria** (iii. 22–iv. 42). Receiving no welcome at Jerusalem, Jesus retired, soon after the festival was over, to the country districts of Judæa bordering on the river Jordan. Here He began to baptize, by the hands of His disciples. This baptism was similar to that of John the Baptist, a preparation for the kingdom. It was a type, or foreshadowing, of Christian Baptism, but is not to be confounded with it, for this latter is the sacrament of admission into the kingdom. The spiritual heads and guides of the nation kept aloof from this baptism of John, and tried to sow dissension between his disciples and those of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Their appeal to John afforded him a last opportunity of witnessing to Christ. He was still at liberty, continuing his baptism, and completing his work. His reply is one of the most beautiful and striking humility, and of entire self-abnegation. There was not one tinge of jealousy, in his heart, at the Lord's apparently greater success. It was all as it should be. To hear the voice of the Bridegroom was a joy to the Friend of the Bridegroom. John rejoiced in this title. But Christ's work was only now beginning, his would soon be over. "He must increase, but I must decrease."

To prevent, perhaps, any possible jealousy arising between the two sets of disciples, and to give no encouragement to the idea of rivalry between Himself

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 25, 26.



and the Baptist, our Lord determined to go again to Galilee. His road, on this occasion, lay through Samaria.<sup>1</sup>

In that long range of hills—a continuation of the loftier Lebanon—that runs through the Holy Land from north to south, midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan, there is one spot where it seems as if rent in twain by some convulsion of past ages. Into the narrow valley thus formed—between Ebal on the north and the more rugged Gerizim on the south—once poured the hosts of Israel, led by their great captain, Joshua. Here, covering the valley, and rising rank above rank upon its sloping sides, they dedicated themselves to the Lord, and solemnly vowed to serve Him and to obey His voice.

In the time of our Lord, the country was in possession of the Samaritans, a mixed race, descendants of the people who had been placed there by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, in the room of the dispossessed Israelites.<sup>2</sup> Between the Samaritans and the Jews there was a chronic feud. The Samaritans claimed, improperly, descent from Jacob, and accepted the Pentateuch as their sacred book. The Jews resented all this.<sup>3</sup>

The course of our Lord's journey brought Him to Jacob's well, situate at the north-eastern base of Gerizim. Here He rested.

St. John, the Evangelist who especially presents our Lord to us as the Son of God, carefully notices many indications of His perfect humanity. He, who later

<sup>1</sup> On the length of our Lord's sojourn in Judæa, see note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John iv. 9; Ezra iv. 1-6.

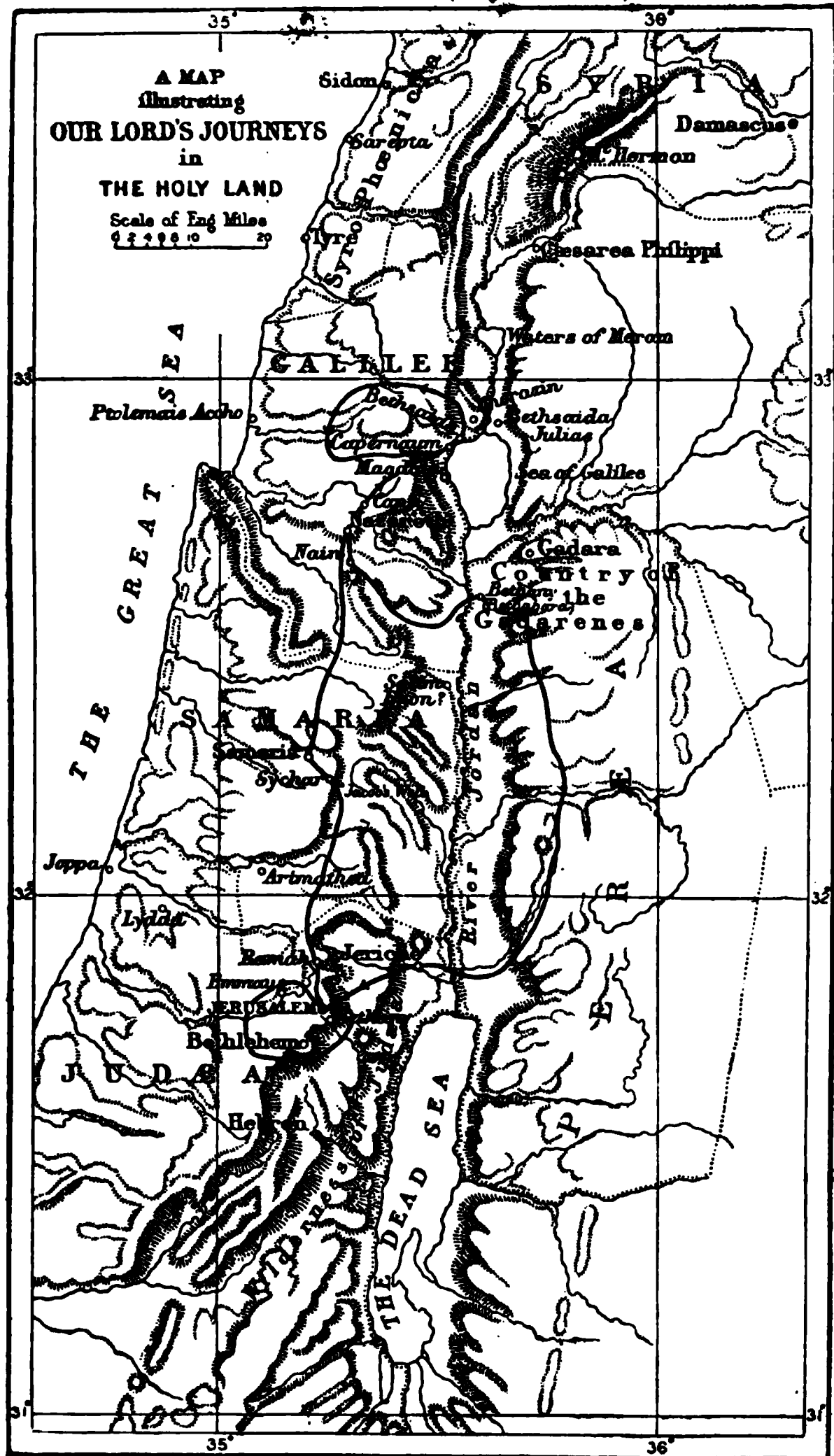


on preserves to us the cry, "I thirst," from the cross, tells us here how Jesus sat "wearied" on the well, when there came to Him a woman of Samaria.<sup>1</sup> The graphic narrative is easy to understand, and gives us an insight into the manners of the two peoples, Jews and Samaritans, who, living side by side, so bitterly hated each other, as to have no dealings one with the other. Many answers have been given to the question, "What did our Lord mean by the Gift of God?"<sup>2</sup> That given by Archbishop Trench seems the best, "The gift of God is here an anticipation of what is immediately to follow, namely, 'He would have given thee living water.'" And what else is this living water, which shall always quench thirst, and shall be a springing fountain, which can be imparted to others, but the same of which our Lord spake afterwards at the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Evangelist adds, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." This gift was not given in its fulness until the Day of Pentecost, after Jesus was glorified. But no foretaste of it could be received without repentance and faith. This thought is the best explanation of the abrupt transition which takes place in the conversation at the words, "Go, call thy husband." Our Lord desired to give the woman this gift, and therefore He spoke words which would at once recall to her her own sins, and declare His own perfect knowledge. The woman saw all that the Lord's words implied, and at once acknowledged Him as a prophet. She sought, how-

<sup>1</sup> St. John fixes the time as "about the sixth hour." This is taken by some to mean six o'clock in the evening; but at that hour there would have been a crowd, more or less, all round. The fact that our Lord and the woman were alone suggests noon as the real time.

<sup>2</sup> "The gift of God" is all that is freely offered in the Son.—PROFESSOR WESTCOTT in *Speaker's Commentary*.







ever, to turn the conversation to the differences of belief concerning the Jewish and Samaritan centres of worship. This was answered by our Lord's explanation of what is real worship, "in spirit and in truth," limited to no place, not so much seeking, as being sought of the Father.

The woman then made a reference to her Messianic hopes, and to this the Lord answered at once, "I, that speak unto thee, am He," words which remind us that one of the objects St. John had in view in writing his Gospel was to show that "Jesus is the Christ."

The woman, full of new and wonderful thoughts, hurriedly left her water-pot, and hastened to the town to tell her news. Is it possible, she asked in effect the inhabitants, and not her husband only, that the great blessing, so long looked for, has at last come to them suddenly and unexpectedly? "Can this be Christ?"<sup>1</sup> Many believed simply upon the woman's report; many more, when they had themselves conversed with the Lord, acknowledged that He was indeed the Saviour of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Just before the woman left to report the astonishing conversation which she had heard, the disciples joined their Master. Though astonished at seeing Him in conversation with a woman,<sup>3</sup> they asked for no explanation, contenting themselves with pressing some refreshment upon Him. But His food was to be about His Father's business, and so Jesus replied that He had been doing that business, sowing the seed, the harvest from which they were to reap. Already the Samaritans

<sup>1</sup> So R.V.; more correctly than A.V.

<sup>2</sup> So R.V., omitting, with many ancient authorities, the words "The Christ."

<sup>3</sup> To converse with a woman, in a public place, was contrary to the custom of the doctors.



were crowding to His teaching. He had laboured, it was theirs to enter in, and reap the fruit.

**Second Manifestation in Galilee** (iv. 43-54). After a brief stay with the Samaritans, our Lord pursued His journey to Galilee, which now that His own country, Judæa,<sup>1</sup> had rejected Him, was to be the principal scene of His ministry. The Galileans "received Him, having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast." Jesus returned again to Cana, and whilst there, a nobleman, a king's officer,<sup>2</sup> came from Capernaum with the entreaty that He would come down and heal His Son, who was at the point of death."

This "nobleman" has by some been identified with the centurion whose servant was healed, as related by St. Matthew and St. Luke ;<sup>3</sup> but the two accounts, far from being different versions of the same miracle, stand out in marked contrast to each other in almost every particular. The centurion is an example of strong faith, the nobleman of a weak faith ; the one believes that our Lord's word is sufficient, and that he is not worthy to receive Him under his roof, the other supposes that only His actual presence will avail ; the one is commended as an example to the Jewish people, the other is gently rebuked for not believing except he should see "signs and wonders." And how differently does our Lord act in the two cases. "Here, being entreated to come, He does not, but sends His healing word ; there, being asked to speak at a distance that word of healing, He rather proposes Himself to come ;

<sup>1</sup> St. John certainly uses the expression, "His own country" in this sense.

<sup>2</sup> Supposed by some to have been Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife was one of the holy women who ministered to the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. viii. 5-13 ; Luke vii. 1-10.



for here, as Chrysostom explains it well, a narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened ; there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going He increases this nobleman's faith, by offering to go He brings out and honours that centurion's humility."<sup>1</sup>

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### NOTES.

#### A. On John ii. 20.

The answer of the Jews does not refer either to the building of the temple by Solomon, or to its rebuilding by Zorobabel and Joshua the high priest, but to its restoration by Herod the Great. He began the work, B.C. 19 or 18, and it was still receiving additional touches at the time of the incidents related by St. John (ii. 20), A.D. 27.

#### B. On the length of our Lord's Sojourn in Judæa, mentioned in John iii. 22.

This cannot be certainly determined. It depends approximately on the meaning to be attached to John iv. 35, 45.

1. If John iv. 35 is taken as a real note of time, then the incident of the Samaritans must have occurred in the December or January succeeding Christ's first passover in the previous April. This would make his sojourn in the Jordan valley to have extended over eight or nine months. Against this view it may be urged that ver. 45 presupposes that the Passover was still quite recent.

2. If John iv. 35 be regarded simply as embodying a proverbial saying, relating to the usual interval between seed time and harvest in Palestine, then the limitation suggested by ver. 45 may be adopted, and the Lord's sojourn by the Jordan shortened to a few weeks, or even days. The Lord's words as to the fields being "white already to harvest" support this view.

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Trench.



## CHAPTER XL.

### Beginning of the Conflict between Jesus and the Jews.

THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA—THE TRUE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH—THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND, AND THE WALKING ON THE SEA—THE BREAD OF LIFE.

#### **S**ECOND Manifestation at Jerusalem :

**Observance of the Sabbath** (v.). At an uncertain interval after His arrival in Galilee, Jesus took the opportunity of a national festival<sup>1</sup> to pay a second visit to Jerusalem. It was the commencement of that conflict between Jesus and the Rulers, which, gathering strength at each successive visit of the Lord to Jerusalem, culminated in His death.

Three of the Lord's miracles afforded to the Jews the opportunities which they sought of renewing and intensifying the conflict. The first of these was the healing of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda.<sup>2</sup>

The waters of this pool<sup>3</sup> were noted for their curative

<sup>1</sup> On the question of what feast this was, see note at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The others were, the giving sight to the man born blind (ix.), and the raising of Lazarus (xi.).

<sup>3</sup> The traditional site of this pool is the *Birket Israil*, by the modern gate of St. Stephen. Some, however, would identify it with the *Fountain of the Virgin*, in the Kedron Valley. The question must remain un-



properties, and came doubtless from an intermittent spring. Each inflow of fresh water was eagerly waited for by the patients who were seated or reclining in the covered space surrounding the pool. Amongst these, one poor man, who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years, attracted the Lord's attention. His infirmity had prevented him from reaching the water in time to avail himself of its healing virtues. But at last the moment of his healing had come. Though he did not know who Jesus was, he obeyed the abrupt and startling command to "take up his bed and walk," and hastened joyfully through the streets of the city.

But it was the sabbath day. "The Jews" therefore taxed the man with breaking the sabbath by carrying his bed, and when they discovered that he was acting under the orders of Jesus, they at once sought to slay the Lord.

The remaining portion of the chapter is our Lord's answer to the accusations of the Sanhedrists. "My Father," He said, "worketh hitherto, and I work." God never ceases from His work of sustaining the creatures of His hand, who would otherwise perish; while the material universe, if left to itself, would speedily return to chaos. Our Lord meant that whatsoever the Father doeth, that also is lawful for His Son to do. Their work is one as Their nature is one. "The Father raiseth up the dead," "the Son quickeneth whom He will." "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*"

The answer still further exasperated the Jews. It

solved. In verse 2, *market*, of A.V. is rightly rendered *gate* in R.V. The words "waiting for : . . he had" (verses 3 and 4), are an interpolation, or early gloss, and are rightly rejected by R.V.



was, as they saw; a distinct claim to be the Son of God. They had, therefore, two charges against Him : (1) That He had broken the sabbath, and (2) That by claiming God as His Father, He made Himself equal with God.

The first charge was untrue, as Jesus had shown. But the second was true. It was a claim, plainly and boldly made, to be the Son of God, not in that lower and general sense in which all men are God's sons, but in a sense altogether peculiar to Himself, as *The Son, The only-begotten Son*, implying a close personal relationship and identity of nature with the Father. Such a claim, made by any mere man, would clearly have been blasphemous.

And mark how He the accused becomes the accuser. "Ye have not His Word abiding in you"—"Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life"—"Ye have not the love of God in you"—"Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me."

In the promise to our first parents and to Abraham, in the prophecies of Jacob and Balaam, in types and sacrifices, in the Angel of the Divine Presence, Moses revealed the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

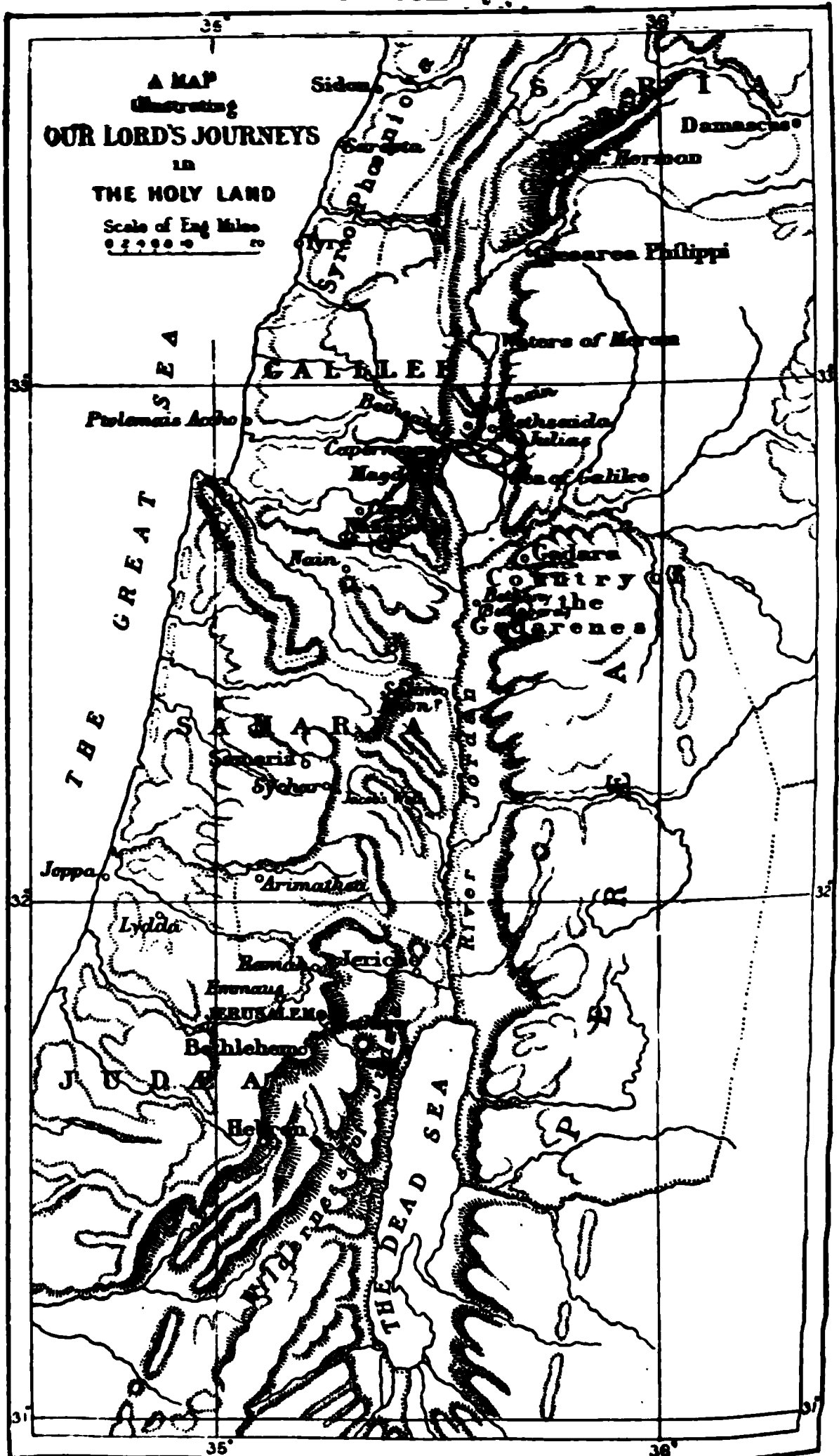
**Third Manifestation in Galilee: The Bread of Life** (vi.). After another uncertain interval<sup>2</sup> of time, St. John introduces us to an incident in our Lord's Galilean ministry, which is the only one, before His last visit to Jerusalem, which is recorded

<sup>1</sup> In verse 25, of this discourse, our Lord is speaking of the spiritually dead, whilst in verses 28, 29 He is speaking of the resurrection of the body from physical death. In verse 39, the word for "search" may be either imperative as in A.V., or indicative as in R.V.

<sup>2</sup> If the unnamed feast was the Passover, the interval would be a year (vi. 4); if Pentecost, it would be nine months; if Purim, a month or six weeks.



# 3rd Journey





by all four Evangelists. The locality of the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand was the north-east corner of the Sea of Tiberias,<sup>1</sup> for St. John gives the lake its classical name, derived from the town of Tiberias, built by Herod, on the western shore. The appeal to Philip is peculiar to St. John. It was probably made early in the day, and left to work in the Apostle's mind until the time came for the Lord to carry out His already formed intention. Philip may have consulted his friend and neighbour, and fellow-disciple Andrew. At any rate, later on in the day Andrew informed his Master of a boy who had some small provision with him. This information was sufficient. With the scanty store of the ordinary coarse barley bread, Jesus satisfied the hunger of those five thousand men.

After the miracle, which carried the thoughts of the people back to the prophecy of Moses, and seemed likely to issue in an outburst of popular enthusiasm, for the display of which the time had not yet arrived, Jesus retired to a mountain alone to pray. He had previously directed His disciples to cross in their ship to the opposite shore, and had dismissed the multitude.

A great storm of wind hindered the disciples in their passage across the lake, so that it was already the fourth watch of the night, when they had accomplished only about half the distance. Jesus then joined them, walking on the sea. After a word of assurance they eagerly welcomed Him, and receiving Him into their vessel, they soon reached Capernaum. The next morning, the people crossed the lake to

<sup>1</sup> This name only occurs here and at xxi. 1. Tiberias is mentioned in these two places and at vi. 23, only.



Capernaum in boats which had arrived during the night.<sup>1</sup>

Amazed to find Jesus already at Capernaum, the people asked Him how He had come there. The question was asked, it would seem in the synagogue,<sup>2</sup> and the answer of our Lord was the great discourse for the sake of which St. John narrates the two miracles of the feeding the multitude and the walking on the sea.

The audience was composed probably partly of Galileans, and partly of Jews of Jerusalem, for St. John means these latter when he speaks of the Jews, and we know from St. Matthew and St. Mark that the Scribes and Pharisees were now following Christ from place to place.<sup>3</sup>

"The whole discourse may be divided into three main portions :—

"1. Verses 26–34, in which Jesus makes clear His distinction between *bodily* and *spiritual* bread.

"2. Verses 35–51, in which He proclaims *Himself* in His Divine nature to be the Bread of Life.

"3. Verses 51–65, in which He further defines that this Bread of Life is to be obtained by eating His Flesh and Blood, *i.e.* by incorporation with His *human nature*."<sup>4</sup>

1. Jesus commenced His discourse by reproving the people, knowing how little they cared for His miracles.

It was for the loaves and fishes that they followed Him, and not for His word and doctrine—for temporal

<sup>1</sup> In verse 23, St. John carefully accounts for the fact that the multitude were able to sail across to Capernaum. The same wind which had hindered the disciples had, it would seem, blown several vessels across from Tiberias to Bethsaida Julias. Of these they made use.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 59.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xv. 1 ; Mark vii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> This division of the discourse is that of Archdeacon Norris.



and not for spiritual benefits. It was that they might eat and be filled, and not because of His revelation of Divine power.

Our Lord bade them work not for the perishing bread only, but for the everlasting bread.

They asked what kind of work would earn the bread He alluded to.

Christ answered, Believe on Me, that I am sent from God.

Prove that Thou art sent from God, they replied. Moses proved himself God's messenger by giving manna ;—*that* was bread from heaven ; the bread Thou gavest us yesterday was from *earth* only.

Christ answered, That neither was manna the true bread from heaven ; nor was Moses the real giver of it. The real giver was His Heavenly Father, and the true Bread of God is He Which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world (ver. 33).

The people, like the woman of Samaria, still thinking of bodily things only, asked Christ to give them this wonderful bread of which He spake.

2. The answer was, "I am the Bread of Life."

This plain declaration that Christ "came down" from heaven offended them (ver. 41); and that *He* could be in any sense bread seemed to them mere mockery.

Seeing this, our Lord repeated the hard saying again and again.

"I am," He said, "the living Bread, which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever."

The Lord meant that the nourishing principle of our eternal life is His Divine nature. But how could that be communicated to us ?



3. He proceeded to explain, in the latter half of ver. 51, "The bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To the people this was harder than all before. So again they cavilled, and again Jesus repeated the paradox, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

The public part of the discourse here ended. It was renewed, more privately, to His disciples, who also had found His words "a hard saying." To them He vouchsafed the explanation He had withheld from the Jews.

Do you find it hard to believe that I came down from heaven? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? Then ye will believe and understand that I came down from heaven.

Then, too, ye will understand that it was of My *glorified spiritual* body<sup>1</sup> of which I spoke just now; and not of My mere flesh, as you now behold it, which would profit you nothing if you were to eat it.

Thus did our Lord reveal to His Apostles that deep truth, which twelve months afterwards He taught them still more vividly in the institution of the Holy Communion, that Christians were to draw all their strength and life from His glorified human nature.

The institution of the Holy Communion gave to us the outward and visible sign and pledge of the inward and spiritual grace promised in this discourse, and described as necessary to our spiritual life. "In the Holy Communion, we stretch out the hand of faith to receive the Living Bread, and God bestows it on the hand so stretched out."

<sup>1</sup> Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 45: "The last Adam became (after His ascension) a quickening Spirit."



**Appeal to the Twelve** (vi. 66-71). The teaching of our Lord produced a marked effect. Many half-hearted disciples, unable to accept His words, or to see their true spiritual bearing, forsook Him at once. Sadly, Jesus appealed to the Twelve, here first mentioned by St. John, and assumed to be a well-known body. "Will ye also go away," He said to them. But though chosen as a distinct body only a few weeks before, they had already grasped firmly the spirit of their Master's teaching. They had seen it expressed in His life, and they were sure that He had "the words of Eternal Life;" and was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God."<sup>1</sup> St. Peter, as usual, led the confession of his brethren.

On the other hand Satan was already at work amongst them. There was one into the secrets of whose heart the Lord was already looking, and seeing the germs of latent evil, perhaps still undreamt of by the man himself. But they would grow, and, unchecked by any seeking for grace, would make a traitor of him. The disciples did not know then which of them was alluded to by the Master, but they came to know afterwards that He spake of Judas Iscariot.

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*NOTE.*

**On the unnamed Feast of John v. 1.**

There has been much discussion about this nameless feast.

(i.) The duration of our Lord's ministry—whether two and a quarter, or three and a quarter years—depends on the answer to the question, "Was it the Passover?" If it was the Passover—which some regard as most probable, seeing that it drew Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Or, as some MSS. read, "The Holy One of God."



up to Jerusalem (comp. ii. 13), and that, in the oldest MS. we have, the article is inserted, "*the* feast of the Jews,"—then clearly we seem to have *four* Passovers distinctly mentioned in St. John's Gospel, viz. ii. 13, v. 1, vi. 4, xiii. 1, showing that our Lord's ministry occupied *three* complete years beside the three months between the Baptism and the first of these Passovers.

Two objections to this view have been raised :—

1. That it obliges us to suppose that St. John passes over a whole year in silence between the end of his *fifth* and the commencement of his *sixth* chapter.

2. That in vii. 21, 23 our Lord alludes to His miracle at Bethesda as something quite fresh in the minds of all, which makes it difficult to suppose that eighteen months had intervened.

(ii.) If we adopt the longer interval of note B, page 364, then we have two limits of time between which the feast must have occurred, viz. the limit of December or January, imposed by iv. 35, and the limit of the Passover, imposed by vi. 4. The only feast occurring between these two limits was the Feast of Purim, which would, therefore, be the feast intended.

(iii.) If we adopt the shorter interval of note B, page 364, then the sojourn in Judæa, the Samaritan incident, and the brief visit to Galilee, of iv. 43-54, might all be included in the weeks between Passover and Pentecost, and this latter feast be the one intended. From vii. 21 it would seem that our Lord did not visit Jerusalem between the unnamed feast and the Feast of Tabernacles. The feast of Pentecost would thus be an answer to the question, and, on the whole, it seems to be the most likely one.



## *CHAPTER XLI.*

### **The Conflict at the Feast of Tabernacles.**

#### **JESUS at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii.-viii.).**

The discourse which we considered in our last chapter was followed by a ministry in Galilee of some six months' duration. St. John sums up this ministry in the few words, "Jesus walked in Galilee."

The fifth chapter of St. John's Gospel records the healing of the impotent man on the sabbath day. This so excited the anger of the rulers, that, as the opening of chapter vii. tells us, Jesus would not walk in Jewry (Judæa), but retired to Galilee, remaining there until the Feast of Tabernacles. At that feast, the controversy was renewed.<sup>1</sup>

St. John tells us that our Lord's brethren were not as yet believers in His Messiahship. But, acknowledging His works as wonderful, and knowing the high nature of His claims, they gave Him good advice according to the maxims of worldly wisdom. They desired Him to display His power, not in remote Galilee, but before the chief priests and rulers in Jerusalem. The people, these brethren thought, would

<sup>1</sup> Our Lord's reference to the case of the impotent man in vii. 21, suggests that the interval had not been a long one, and supposing chapter vi. to be in its right place, makes for the unnamed feast being that of Purim. So does the fact that the Lord was in Galilee when "the Passover was nigh at hand."



follow their spiritual guides, and thus the Lord's recognition by the whole nation would follow. But Jesus, wishing to avoid the publicity of the pilgrim crowd, and with the thought of the great paschal journey of six months' later already in His mind, declined to join them in their journey. The hour for His manifestation had not yet come.

Accordingly, a few days later, He went up privately, in secret, and not till the first days of the feast were over.

This Feast of Tabernacles, the third and most popular of the great feasts of the Jews, commemorated the tent life of the people in the wilderness. It was designed as a season of thankfulness for the past, and of hope for the future. Commencing on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after the vintage, the latest of the crops, was gathered in, it lasted seven days. During this week, the people were commanded to live in booths or tents. These were made of the branches of palms and other trees, and raised upon the flat roofs of their houses, in the courts of the Temple, or any other open or convenient space.<sup>1</sup>

The rulers, hoping to carry out their intention of putting our Lord to death, sought for Him in vain during the early days of the feast; and, supposing that He dared not be seen in Jerusalem, had ceased probably to watch for Him, when suddenly He appeared in the Temple and taught there. He, said our Lord, who doeth the will of God will understand the counsel of God; and then, referring to His condemnation because He had healed on the sabbath day, He showed the unfairness and hypocrisy of those who made the law of the sabbath yield to the law of cir-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xvi. 13-16. Cf. Neh. viii. 13-18.



cumcision, and yet persecuted Him for making it give way to the still higher law of mercy and love. The people were divided in their opinion, but "many believed on Him ;" and when the rulers heard these things, they sent officers to take Him, but they returned without effecting their purpose, and with the striking testimony, "Never man spake like this Man." It was the custom at this Feast of Tabernacles to bring water from the Pool of Siloam and solemnly offer it to God in the Temple, in commemoration probably of the miraculous supply of water in the wilderness : and now, on the last great day of the festival, Jesus, drawing, as so often, an illustration from a familiar custom, proclaimed aloud to the multitude, which had come up to the House of the Lord from all parts of the country, that great gift of the Holy Spirit—the "living water"—which He would give to all who should believe on Him.

The council of rulers, bent on His destruction, were greatly irritated at their failure to arrest One Who spoke so fearlessly, exposing their subterfuges, and setting up a standard of righteous judgment quite different from theirs. They angrily rejected the just and legal proposal of Nicodemus, and broke up, apparently, without being able to agree what course to adopt under these new and perplexing circumstances.

Another custom of this feast was to light two great chandeliers of oil lamps in the court of the women. This was done on the first night of the festival, and perhaps on the other nights as well. To this custom our Lord is supposed to have alluded, when, towards the close of the feast, He said, "I am the light of the world." The Pharisees at once took objection, because, as they said, He bare witness of Himself. But



Jesus, by declaring His perfect union with the Father, showed that the witness was twofold, and fulfilled therefore the condition of the Jewish law.<sup>1</sup> Continuing the discourse, our Lord spoke to them sadly of the outlook before them—"they should die in their sins," and contrasted His and their condition: He from above, not of this world; they, from beneath, of this world. When pressed with the question, "Who art Thou?" He spoke to them of His coming crucifixion, and through it, of His resurrection and ascension, and assured them that then they should know that He was the Messiah, whom He claimed to be.<sup>2</sup> Although this revelation of Himself was even more clear than any our Lord had yet made, they did not understand Him. The effect, however, was that many believed on Him. But it was a half-hearted belief. When Jesus spoke to them of the freedom which The Truth gives, they resented the idea that they were slaves. He only insisted more strongly on their state of bondage, and that of the worst kind, for the Devil was their father, and the lusts of their father they would do.

Presently, after a pause,<sup>3</sup> the discourse took a fresh turn, and our Lord's words are again addressed to "the Jews" generally. To them He spoke of belief

<sup>1</sup> The discourse was spoken "in the Treasury," which was in the court of the women, and within hearing of His enemies, who sat in a room called Gazith, close by. Yet "no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come."

<sup>2</sup> In verse 25 the words "Even that," etc., have been variously interpreted. Four interpretations may be noted: (1) I am what I declare to you, "The Beginning;" (2) I am what I have always said I was, from the commencement of My ministry; (3) I am that which I ever speak unto you, or "My Person is my teaching;" (4) how is it (I wonder) that I even speak to you at all (R.V. margin). The last is probably right.

<sup>3</sup> At verse 47.



in Himself delivering a man from death. He meant by death that bondage to sin, which is the true dying to God, and all that is good. But they took His words literally, and instancing Abraham and the prophets, who were all dead, demanded, "Whom makest Thou Thyself," that Thou claimest to keep men from death. In reply, our Lord told them that Abraham, instead of being opposed to Him, had rejoiced to see His day.<sup>1</sup> This answer they could not understand. But when Jesus went on to say, "Before Abraham was (born), I am," they looked upon Him as a blasphemer, for He had used the sacred name "I AM" of Himself. With such an one, they could keep no terms;<sup>2</sup> they sought at once to kill Him. But He "hid Himself and went out of the Temple."

We have so far omitted the incident with which the eighth chapter begins. It interrupts, as is plain, the narrative of the discourses, and indeed, though undoubtedly a part of Holy Scripture, it ought not to find its place here.<sup>3</sup> Where it ought to be inserted is exceedingly doubtful. In some MSS. it forms part of St. Luke's Gospel, coming after his twenty-first chapter. In others it is placed at the end of this Gospel of St. John. It probably belongs to the time of our Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, some six months later than the discourse of this eighth chapter.

The incident itself affords us a very remarkable example of our Lord's use of, what the Baptist called, His winnowing fan. The concluding words, "Neither

<sup>1</sup> We may understand our Lord to mean by Abraham rejoicing to see His day, that the patriarch saw the work of Christ foreshadowed in the sacrifice of Isaac, and that when he passed within the veil, the whole of the work of redemption was revealed to him, as if it were already present.

<sup>2</sup> See Lev. xxiv. 16.

<sup>3</sup> The interpolation is from vii. 53-viii. 11.



do I condemn thee," do not mean that the Lord forgave the woman, but merely that it was no part of His office at that time to pass sentence of punishment upon her. That He recognized her moral guilt is clear from His words, "Go, and sin no more."



## *CHAPTER XLII.*

### **The Conflict at the Feast of Dedication.**

**HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND—THE GOOD SHEPHERD—RETIREMENT BEYOND JORDAN.**

**H**EALING of the Man Born Blind (ix.). The next incident selected by St. John in fulfilment of his purpose of proving that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," occurred at the Feast of the Dedication.<sup>1</sup> This Feast was held in December, about three months after that of Tabernacles. It was instituted about B.C. 164, when the Temple was purified and re-dedicated by Judas Maccabeus, after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>2</sup>

Resting under the shadow of the Temple, a number of poor afflicted people were wont to congregate, awaiting the alms of their more fortunate fellow-citizens, who might be going to or returning from public worship. Amongst these, probably, it was that Jesus, "as he passed by" saw one blind from his birth. His was a well-known case, and had probably often given rise to discussions about sin and its punishment. Our Lord's disciples had imbibed the common notion

<sup>1</sup> The true reading of x. 22, is "Then" (at that time, R.V., margin) "was the Feast of Dedication." This connects chapters ix. and x. into one consecutive narrative, fixing the time of the healing of the blind man.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Macc. iv. 36-59.



amongst the Jews of retributive suffering.<sup>1</sup> That such may be the case, our Lord had already allowed,<sup>2</sup> but He protests against the application of so cruel a thought in all cases.<sup>3</sup> Our<sup>4</sup> duty, He points out, is not so much to inquire as to the origin of sin, as to seek for remedies, so that the "works of God may be made manifest."

Jesus at once carried out his own precept. Anointing the eyes of the blind man with clay, He bade him wash it away in the Pool of Siloam.<sup>5</sup>

In unquestioning obedience he hastened to fulfil the command; and as he washed in the pool, the glorious vision of earth and sky, city, Temple and tower, burst upon him, and the dark shadows of his long night were dispelled by the Sun of Righteousness. The Lord had said "Let there be light," and there was light.

In a little while the man who had been born blind was brought before the council of rulers, because he had been healed on the sabbath day. They hoped by working upon his fear of being put out of the synagogue, or, as we should say,<sup>6</sup> of excommunication, to

<sup>1</sup> The disciples proposed three alternatives: either (1) the man sinned before birth, or (2) in a previous state of existence (cf. Wisd. viii. 20), or (3) his parents had sinned (Exod. xx. 5; Heb. vii. 10).

<sup>2</sup> John v. 14. Cf. Matt. ix. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Luke xiii. 2. So Job ix. 21, etc.

<sup>4</sup> See John ix. 4. R.V. "We."

<sup>5</sup> "*The Pool of Siloam*" was a small deep reservoir in the valley, near the junction of the two valleys which almost girdle Jerusalem, due south of Mount Moriah, on which the Temple stood; and its waters, flowing from a smaller basin in the rock a few feet higher up, were said to come from a living spring beneath the Temple. Its waters were used in the Temple worship, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. Its name signifies "Sent," and St. John seems to point to a symbolic meaning (ix. 7). The God-sent spring of water was to typify Christ, the "Sent" from the Father.

<sup>6</sup> Three degrees of excommunication were in use amongst the Jews.



use him as a tool, and turn his evidence against his Benefactor.

Upon this occasion there was a division amongst them. Some said this Man (Jesus) is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day ; others asked "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" The blind man, upon being again appealed to, expressed his belief in Jesus as a prophet.

Doubts were then expressed as to the man having been born blind at all. To settle this point, the man's parents were called. They corroborated the report, but through fear of the consequences refused to commit themselves further. Their son, being of age, might answer for himself.

Calling the man again before them, the rulers pretended to have discovered the imposture. "This man" (Jesus) "is a sinner," they said. The glory therefore must be given to God. But the blind man was not to be moved. "Whether He be a sinner, I know not : one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Irritated by their continued questioning, the blind man at last seems to have lost patience, and to have answered angrily, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear? Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples?"

After some further sharp passages, the rulers excommunicated the man. Cast out as evil by men, our Lord sought him, and having already given to this

By the first, the excommunicated person was expelled from the synagogue for thirty days, and this is supposed to be referred to in St. John ix. 22. Upon continued impenitence this term was prolonged, first to sixty and then to ninety days. By the third and severest kind of excommunication, pronounced in a solemn assembly or court, the offender was cut off from all communication with his fellow-men.



poor man the gift of sight, He now revealed Himself to him as "the Son of God."

The growth of this man's faith, his joyful acceptance of a Divine Redeemer, and his ready worship when he had found Him, are very instructive ; and finally, the lesson of the whole narrative is summed up by our Lord in the solemn words : "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." Those whose blindness is not wilful, who desire the light, shall be made to see ; those who hate the true light, but are wise in their own eyes and boast of their own light, will, as a judgment, be made blind. It was so with the Pharisees. Therefore, in answer to their angry question, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said to them, "If ye were blind" (unwillingly so) "ye should have no sin ; but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth."

**Discourse on the Good Shepherd** (x. 1-21). Jesus denounced such spiritual guides as false shepherds, and declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep. In Judæa shepherds and their flocks were seen on every hill-side, and such terms as the sheep-fold, with its stone wall, the wicket-gate or door, the porter or keeper of the door, would be readily understood. The Eastern shepherd calls his sheep by name, and they follow him, for they know his voice.<sup>1</sup> He does not drive, but

<sup>1</sup> A traveller once affirmed to an Eastern shepherd that the sheep knew him not by his voice but by his dress, which, however, the shepherd disputed ; and, to settle the point, they exchanged dresses. The traveller, though wearing the dress of their keeper, called in vain to the sheep to follow him ; but they came instantly at the voice of the real shepherd, although so strangely disguised. "They know not the voice of strangers" (x. 5).



leads his sheep to pasture, tends them, and if need be lays down his life in defending them. The shepherd enters the fold by the door ; while the robber climbeth up some other way.

The Israelites were descended from shepherds, and were used, as we have seen, to shepherd-life. They knew that God's chosen people were sometimes spoken of under the image of a flock of sheep, their spiritual guides as shepherds, and the Messiah as the Chief Shepherd ;<sup>1</sup> but they did not fully enter into the import of Christ's words, and especially, the meaning of the door of the fold they failed to understand.

Then our Lord said plainly, "I am the door. All that ever came before Me" (pretending, that is, to be the true Shepherd or Messiah) "are thieves and robbers ;" and so likewise are all those false shepherds who refuse to enter the fold by Christ as the door.

What, however, was the effect of our Lord's words upon His hearers? The haters of the light, and the despisers of His reproof, became only more blind and more malignant : "He hath a devil and is mad, why listen to Him?" but His friends, appealing to His words and works, exclaimed, "These are not the words of one who hath a devil. Can one possessed by a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

**Final Testimony of our Lord to Himself** (x. 22-39). The scene of the discourse on the Good Shepherd was Solomon's porch, a magnificent cloister on the east side of the Temple,<sup>2</sup> rebuilt by Herod the Great. Here, as St. John tells us, Jesus, doubtless for the sake of the shelter, was walking on that winter's morning.<sup>3</sup> The division between His friends and

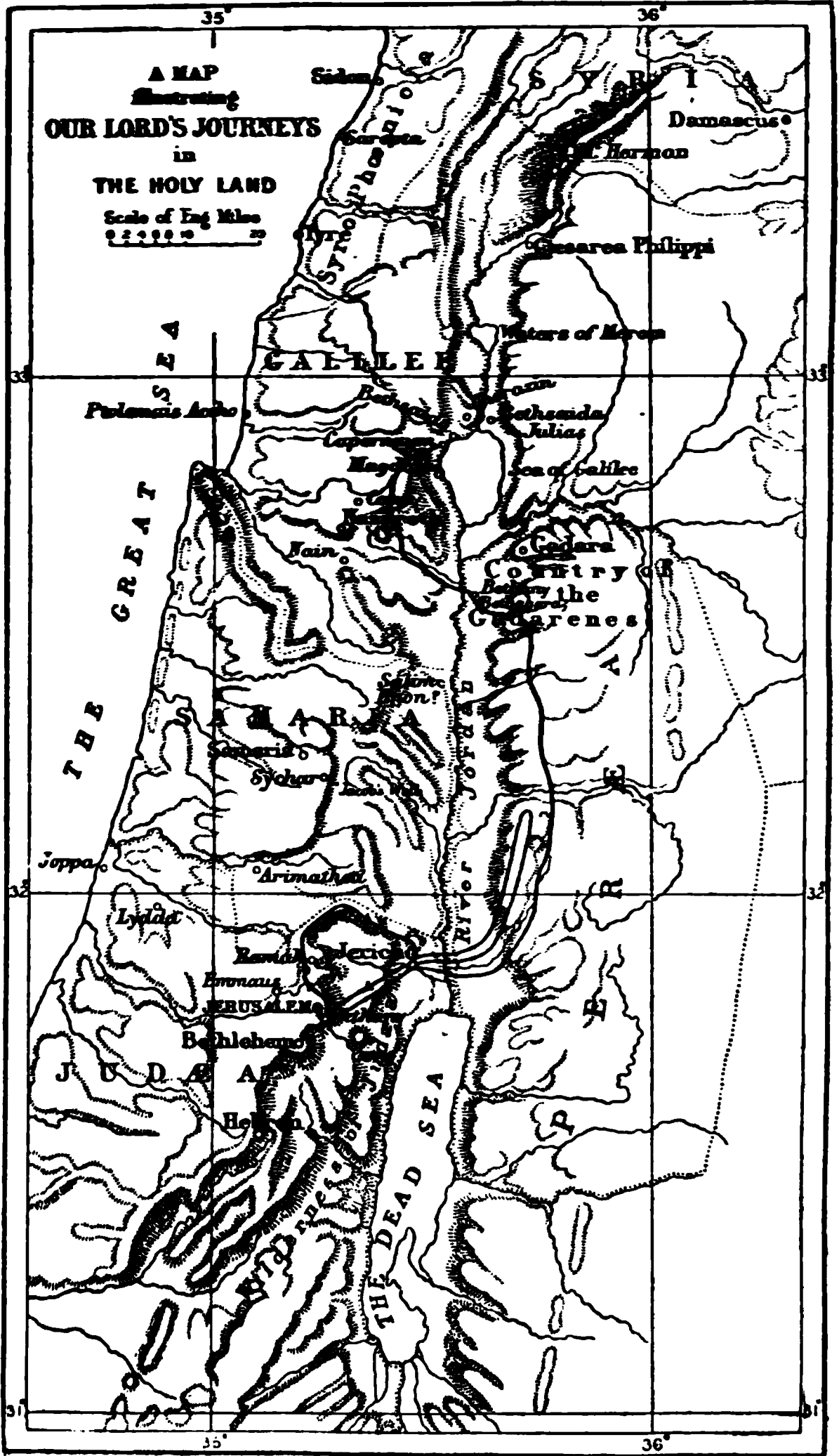
<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> See note A, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> So, better, R.V.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Journey





enemies as to His true character seems to have occasioned a lull in the conversation. The minds of His listeners had been deeply stirred. For a brief moment it would seem they were in real suspense<sup>1</sup> as to the true character of Jesus Christ, and for that moment it would seem as if they were open to conviction. But it was of the briefest duration. Gathering round the Lord again, they asked Him to tell them plainly who He was. His reply was the last public testimony which Jesus gave to Himself, and it was the clearest He had yet given. "I and My Father are one."<sup>2</sup> This was too much for His questioners. To them, prepared perhaps to accept a modified claim to the Messiahship, this claim to Divinity, for which they were not prepared, was blasphemous. They took up stones again to stone Him. It would seem that their hatred ever increased in proportion as Christ revealed to them His Divine Nature. It was, we must ever remember, to His claim to be the Son of God, that He was in the end a Martyr.

"There is nothing," it has been said, "in human record so tragical, nothing so terrible, as St. John's description in these latter chapters of the ever-deepening hatred with which these Pharisees thirsted for the blood of that Holy One Who had appeared among them. His words, His very presence, testified against them that their works and hearts were evil."

**Retirement beyond Jordan** (x. 40-42). The hostility of the Jews compelled our Lord to seek retire-

<sup>1</sup> See R.V. which gives the correct rendering.

<sup>2</sup> "The incarnation was the proof of the complete unity of the Father and the Son. Through that was shown the true connection between God and man."—PROFESSOR WESTCOTT, in *Speaker's Commentary*.



ment once more in Peræa.<sup>1</sup> Here, amidst the scene of the Baptist's earlier labours, and attended by a band of faithful and devoted followers, Jesus tarried, until summoned once more to Judæa by the death of His friend Lazarus.

<sup>1</sup> That Jesus had already sought refuge there, is implied in St. John's word "again."



## *CHAPTER XLIII.*

### **The Last Warning.**

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS—EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE  
—RETIREMENT TO EPHRAIM—THE ANOINTING  
AT BETHANY—TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERU-  
SALEM—CHRIST'S JUDGMENT—REFLECTIONS OF  
ST. JOHN.

**THE Raising of Lazarus** (xi. 1-46). While Jesus tarried at Bethabara (or Bethany) beyond the Jordan a message was brought to Him from the village near Jerusalem, also called Bethany, situated on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Its words were few but full of meaning : "He whom Thou lovest is sick" ; and it came, not from strangers, but from friends ; for Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus loved to minister to our Lord while He rested in their quiet and secluded home.

Jesus answered, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God ;" and with these comforting words the messenger doubtless returned to the sorrowing sisters.

Though usually so prompt to go to those who needed His help, on this occasion our Lord lingered still, for some good reason, two days in Peræa. Then He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judæa again ;" but they would save Him from running so great a



risk : " Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again ? "

Their Divine Master would have them understand, however, that His enemies could not prevail against Him until their permitted time had come. " A man walks in the day without stumbling ; so no harm can come to Me while My day lasts ; and you will not stumble while you keep close to Me Who am the Light of the World. "

The disciples mistook their Lord's meaning about the sleep of Lazarus, so He told them plainly their friend was dead, but that He would go to him ; and Thomas expressed both his fidelity and his misgivings in the words, " Let us also go that we may die with Him. "

Arrived at Bethany, they found it even as Jesus had said, for Lazarus had been in his grave four days ; so that, probably, he died the very day that the messenger was despatched to Jesus.

Through the dreary days that followed, the weeping sisters watched and waited for the coming of their Lord ; and when at last they met Him, they could only falter out their belief, that had He been with them their brother would not have died.

" Thy brother shall rise again ; " " I am the Resurrection and the Life ; " " He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die, "—death being no interruption to life in Christ. Such were the Divine words with which He comforted Martha and Mary.

Nevertheless, when He saw them weeping, and their friends also weeping who were with them, how truly He sympathized with their grief is recorded by St. John in those words of deepest pathos, "*Jesus wept!*" so that even the Jews exclaimed, " Behold how He loved him ! "



Few words were spoken. When Jesus asked "Where have ye laid him?" they answered briefly, "Lord, come and see."

In a little while they stood around the rock-hewn tomb. Silencing Martha's objection to the removal of the stone covering the entrance to the grave, Jesus lifted up His voice in thanksgiving to His heavenly Father for having heard Him.<sup>1</sup> To them who heard Him, the Lord's words would be suggestive of the mysterious union of the Father and the Son, always perfect and always uninterrupted. The thanksgiving was followed by the command, "Lazarus, come forth." It was instantaneously obeyed. Lazarus came forth, no longer a lifeless corpse, but once more a living man.

A miracle so stupendous, performed almost under the eyes of the ecclesiastical rulers of Jerusalem, and in presence of unfriendly and therefore unwilling witnesses, could not be gainsaid. If anything, therefore, could have overcome the prejudices and hostility of the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and have led them to faith in Jesus as the Christ, this must have done so ; but as they did not believe the testimony of Moses and the prophets, so neither would they be convinced though one rose from the dead.

They could not, indeed, deny the reality of Lazarus's resurrection, for "many of the Jews" who saw it believed in the Lord, while others, in no friendly spirit we may suppose, "went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done ;" testifying no doubt to the reality of Lazarus's death and resurrection.

**The Counsel of Caiaphas** (xi. 47-52). A meeting of the Sanhedrin was at once held, to

<sup>1</sup> The prayer seems presupposed in verse 4.



consider what should be done. Great anxiety was expressed lest the Romans, hearing of the crowds following Jesus, should take alarm, and deprive the nation of such liberty as it still possessed. Caiaphas, who was not the true high priest, but had been intruded into the office by the Romans,<sup>1</sup> counselled the death of Jesus. This advice fell in with the wishes of the majority, and accordingly "they took counsel together for to put Him to death."

The counsel of Caiaphas implied a surrender of Jesus to the Roman power, as a kind of propitiation. To the Pharisees probably, hating their subjection to the Romans, and desiring rather to condemn Jesus on a charge of blasphemy, this mode of procedure was not altogether palatable. Caiaphas, however, had taken the lead out of their hands, and from this time we find the Sadducean party, to which Caiaphas belonged,<sup>2</sup> foremost in the persecution of our Lord.

Caiaphas himself, whilst giving expression to his own will, uttered "an unconscious announcement of the atonement," and "of the redeeming power of Christ's death." St. John, in his reflection upon Caiaphas's words, draws out for us this deeper meaning, and notes that it was given in that year which, as the year of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was the crisis year in the spiritual history of mankind, the end of the old dispensation, the beginning of the new.

**Retirement to Ephraim** (xi. 54). The Lord's life was no longer safe in Jerusalem. "The nation, in

<sup>1</sup> Caiaphas held office from A.D. 25 to 36, when he was deposed. The high priests were, at this time, appointed by the Roman Governor, and held office during his pleasure, often for a limited period.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 17.



its highest council, presided over by the high priest, had decided in the most solemn manner that the public safety demanded His death. All that now remained to be done was to determine how His death could be best effected." To escape from them, until "His hour was come," our blessed Lord, accompanied by a few faithful followers, withdrew to the small retired town of Ephraim, situated in the mountainous district overlooking the Jordan valley, and some sixteen miles north-east of Jerusalem. In this quiet seclusion Jesus spent, probably, some six weeks, until the Passover was again near at hand. With the approach of that festival, He appears to have descended to, and to have crossed, the Jordan, and to have joined the pilgrim caravan from Galilee on its way to Jerusalem. So, knowing all things that were to be accomplished, and that His time was at hand, He came again to Bethany, "six days before the Passover."

Arriving there on the Friday, He took up His abode, probably, with Lazarus and his sisters, while the pilgrims to the feast continued their journey to Jerusalem.

**The Anointing at Bethany** (xii. 1-11). It seems likely that it was on the next day, Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, that "they made Him a supper," at which Martha served and Lazarus was a guest; and from St. Matthew and St. Mark we learn that it took place at the house of Simon the leper.<sup>1</sup> This meal was made for ever memorable by an incident connected with it.

As they sat at meat Mary paid her Lord a last act

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3: It has been conjectured that Martha was the widow of Simon the leper, and that the house still bore his name. Evidently, she acted the part of hostess.



of homage. With quiet loving grace she brought forth an alabaster casket of very costly perfume ; and breaking off the sealed top, she poured her offering upon His head, and then anointed His feet.<sup>1</sup>

Besides being a token of love and honour to her Lord, this act of Mary had a peculiar significance.

It was usual to anoint the bodies of those who had died with fragrant lotions before interment ; our Lord, therefore, at once connected the act with His approaching death.<sup>2</sup>

But even while the fragrance filled the house, a murmur arose amongst the disciples, which the traitor Judas originated, and to which he gave utterance in the words that the spikenard ointment ought to have been "sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor." He did not care for the poor, but he was, as St. John tells us, a thief, and had the bag, and bare, or perhaps "appropriated," what was put therein.<sup>3</sup>

From this we learn that our Lord and His Apostles had a common fund ; that contributions were made to it ; that the poor were succoured out of it ; that Judas was the treasurer ; and, finally, that, faithless to the trust reposed in him, this evil-minded and avaricious man robbed his Divine Master, his fellow disciples and the poor, to whose interests he pretended to be so keenly alive.

It soon became known in Jerusalem that Jesus had

<sup>1</sup> Matt: xxvi: 7:

<sup>2</sup> In his record of the commendation bestowed upon Mary, St. John omits the promise of future record of the act.

<sup>3</sup> The "bag" was probably a box or chest of which Judas had the key: Cf. 2 Chron: xxiv. 8, where the same word is used in LXX. version. Judas had gifts of management, we may suppose, through which temptation came to him: Being bearer of the common purse, the opportunity of self-conquest was given him, and he neglected it.—See WESTCOTT, in *Speaker's Commentary*.



arrived at Bethany, and in consequence a number of the Jerusalem and Judæan Jews flocked out of the city, not only to see Jesus, but Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Lazarus, as a living witness to our Lord's power and glory, became an offence to the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and they "consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death."

**The Entry into Jerusalem** (xii. 12-19). St. John relates our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem more briefly than the other Evangelists, doubtless because it was a perfectly familiar story to those for whom he wrote.

He says that Jesus "when He had found a young ass sat thereon ;" but the particulars of that finding he omits.

He tells us likewise that the people who went forth from Jerusalem to meet Him were people who had come to the feast, not inhabitants of the city therefore, but pilgrims from Galilee, Peræa and other parts.

It was amidst the rejoicings and hosannas of these strangers chiefly, bearing aloft, as emblems of victory, branches of the kingly palm,<sup>2</sup> that our Lord entered Jerusalem on that memorable first day of the week ; while the Pharisees, secretly blaming probably their leaders, looked on, and exclaimed despairingly, "Behold the world is gone after Him."

**The Request of the Greeks, and Christ's Answer** (xii. 20-36). Passing over in silence the

<sup>1</sup> St. John carefully distinguishes between "the Jews," or the rulers ; the "common people of Judæa" (xii. 9, 11), and the pilgrims from Galilee and Peræa, the "much people" of xii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, not branches, but leaves or fronds ; palms being endogenous trees (increasing by internal growth) are unbranched.



events of the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, recorded by the other Evangelists, St. John mentions an incident foreshowing the Lord's future sovereignty, which is left unnoted by them. It probably occurred on the Wednesday.<sup>1</sup> As Gentiles from the East had come to the brightness of Messiah's rising, so now others from the West were to be witnesses of His suffering and death, and perhaps were to carry back to their homes the news of His resurrection. These western Gentiles, who, St. John tells us, sought an interview with the Lord, were proselytes of the gate, who had come to the feast. For some unexplained reason, they appealed to Philip, whose Greek name suggests some family connection with foreigners, to procure for them the favour they desired. Philip hesitating,<sup>2</sup> sought, it would seem, the advice of his friend Andrew. The two together appear to have introduced the Greeks to our Lord.

Christ's reply revealed (1) That the condition upon which alone the Gospel could be extended to the world was His own death. That was now near. And therefore He spoke already of the Son of Man being glorified. The glory would be in the drawing all men to Himself by His cross, and teaching them that true life can only be reached through death. Our Lord spoke of this as if already accomplished, and as if He were, already, in thought, enjoying the resurrection-life, when in His glorified humanity, freed from the

<sup>1</sup> During the earlier part of the week, the multitude were distinctly favourable to Jesus. On the Friday they had veered round, and joined their rulers in condemning Him. This change of feeling may be accounted for by our Lord's declaration in xii. 32 of His approaching death. This was contrary to their thoughts about the Messiah (xii. 34), and produced consequently a revulsion of feeling. Hence, the Wednesday has been suggested as the day of the incident which gave rise to Christ's words.

<sup>2</sup> See Matt. xv. 24, for a reason for the hesitation.



restraints of this life, He should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

The reply revealed also (2) the condition upon which the Christian may share his Master's life of glory. It is the sacrifice of the soul, or natural life ; the putting aside the perishable, the cleaving to the imperishable. Only so is the higher life of the other world prepared for.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of His answer, a deep distress and anguish suddenly took possession of our Lord's human soul. It was at the thought of His approaching conflict with Satan.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord was to overcome—not by His divine power, for that would have been easy,—but by His obedience, His righteousness and His holiness. This sudden anguish was a foretaste of the yet deeper agony of Gethsemane, which, omitted by St. John, is so solemnly recorded by the other Evangelists. There was the same cry for deliverance, the same resignation to His Father's will, and as there the angel brought him succour from above, so now those who stood by were startled by the voice from heaven in answer to His prayer.<sup>3</sup>

For a while the anguish was over. Calmly the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 19-21, x. 39, xvi. 25 ; Luke ix. 24. We should note that the words "life" (ver. 25) and "soul" (ver. 27), are one and the same word in the original. "It expresses the fulness of man's continuous being ;" in it "was gathered up the fulness of present human life."—WESTCOTT.

<sup>2</sup> See ver. 31. For other sudden transitions in feeling in the life of our Lord, we may compare Matt. xi. 20, 25 ; Luke xix. 38, 41.

<sup>3</sup> To most of the bystanders the voice was a mere sound (ver. 29). "The apprehension of a divine voice depends upon man's capacity for hearing." Cf. Acts ix. 7, xxii. 9, xxvi. 13. This was the third testimony of the Father to Christ, the first being at His Baptism and the second at the Transfiguration. "I have both glorified it" may be referred to Christ's victory over Satan in the wilderness of temptation, and "will glorify it again" to His second victory in the garden and on the cross.



Lord again spoke of His death, and of the manner of it. This brought about the crisis. All the prejudices of His hearers awoke against the thought of a suffering Messiah.<sup>1</sup> Jesus made one last appeal to them, and then left them. It was the close of His public ministry. Though a few, even among the rulers, believed Him, feebly and half-heartedly, yet the nation at large had at last finally and completely rejected Him.

**Reflections of the Evangelist** (xii. 37-41, 44-50). St. John interrupts his narrative to offer some thoughts of his own upon this rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. He sees in it the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy,<sup>2</sup> that the nation for its sins would be visited with spiritual blindness. And then he concludes with some extracts from former discourses of Christ bearing on this point, affording a sort of summary of His teaching, and showing that the national rejection of Jesus was against the clearest testimony.

<sup>1</sup> For the words "Christ abideth for ever" of ver. 34, see Psa. cx. 4; Isa. ix. 7; Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. liii.



## *CHAPTER XLIV.*

### **The Last Paschal Meal.**

**JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET—HE DENOUNCES  
THE TRAITOR—JUDAS TAKES HIS DEPARTURE.**

**THE Washing of the Disciples' Feet** (xiii. 1-20). It was on the evening of the 13th Nisan,<sup>1</sup> that our Lord and His Apostles prepared to eat their last Paschal meal together. They walked in from Bethany, and sat down in the upper chamber which had been already prepared for the reception. The account of what followed, given us by St. John, is, with the exception of the announcement of the betrayal, peculiar to himself.

It would appear from St. Luke's account that after the institution of the Holy Communion, the strife for

<sup>1</sup> That is, the Thursday evening. According to the Jewish mode of reckoning, this would be the beginning of Friday, 14th Nisan. The difficulty of reconciling the account of St. John with those of the three earlier Evangelists seems to be best met by understanding the Last Supper to have been eaten at the commencement of the 14th Nisan, and the death of our Lord to have taken place towards its close. The 14th Nisan may be thus divided : 6 p.m. to midnight, Last Supper, Discourse and Agony ; midnight to 6 a.m., Betrayal and Jewish trial ; 6 to 9 a.m., Roman Trial ; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Crucifixion. The death of our Lord, the true Paschal Lamb, thus took place at the hour when the priests commenced to slay the Paschal lambs. Before 6 p.m. Joseph had buried the Body of the Lord.



priority amongst the Apostles was renewed.<sup>1</sup> To quell this strife, our blessed Lord gave, as we may gather from St. John, a last proof of His perfect love<sup>2</sup> for His disciples. He assumed the office of the slave, and was amongst them "as He that serveth."<sup>3</sup> How great an act of condescension this washing of their feet was felt by the disciples to be is plain not only from St. Peter's remonstrance, but also from the very solemn and impressive way in which St. John introduces his notice of the incident. To "wash the saints' feet" became, if not an early Christian proverb for humility, at least an office of sacred obligation upon the "widows" of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

And yet, all the time, Jesus did not forget His Divine Sonship. Indeed it was the thought of the now rapidly approaching consummation of His work, and His coming departure to the Father which lay, if so we may speak, at the root of this great act of love and service.<sup>5</sup> This is clear from the Lord's reply to the vehement remonstrance of St. Peter. At present, the full meaning of the act, the Lord said, would not be clear to him. But the knowledge would come by degrees, as they were able to grasp more fully and clearly the whole truth about their Master's person and work. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter."

Peter was still disinclined to submit, and mistaking his own self-will for humility, exclaimed, "Thou shalt never wash *my* feet." To which Christ replied, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." So

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Both A.V. and R.V. translate "unto the end." But the marginal rendering of R.V. "to the uttermost" seems better.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 27.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. v. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Phil. ii. 7, 8.



solemn a warning broke down the Apostle's objection, and with characteristic eagerness he desired that hands and head should be washed as well as his feet. Our Lord then in answer took occasion to explain more fully the spiritual meaning of His act.

There was no need, He said, in effect, to wash more than the feet. The guest, who has bathed at home, does not need to do more than cleanse his feet when he arrives at his host's house. So, he who has been bathed in "the laver of regeneration," has been cleansed from his sin, but yet needs a daily washing from the defilements and stains contracted in his walk through life.<sup>1</sup> Without such daily cleansing the "bathing" at last ceases to be effectual, and we have no longer any "part with Christ." And as with the individual, so with the Church at large. The Apostles, as representing the Church, had been "bathed" by their communion and loving intercourse with their Divine Master. Yet even amongst them one had never really partaken of the cleansing. The "body" must be cleansed by the departure of that one.

As soon as the washing was over, Jesus resumed His place at the table, and explained to the disciples that, beside the deeper spiritual meaning of what He had done, He had given them a lesson in that interchange of acts of humility and love in which the

<sup>1</sup> St. John uses one word for the "bathing" the whole body, and another for the "washing" of any special part. This is brought out by R.V. That there is an allusion in our Lord's words to the Sacrament of Baptism seems plain from a comparison of them with Eph. v. 26 ; Tit. iii. 5 ; Heb. x. 22. The Collect for Christmas Day brings out our Lord's teaching here most clearly. St. Augustine (quoted by Norris) says, "In baptism a man is bathed all over, feet included ; but inasmuch as he has to live under human conditions, he must needs tread this earth ; so the feet that yet need washing are the human affections, which need daily cleansing."



strength of the Christian body would consist.<sup>1</sup> The real blessedness<sup>2</sup> of the knowledge they had gained by their Master's act of humility would consist in following His example.

But there was one who would have no share in that blessedness. All along Jesus had known that one of the little band would "lift up his heel against Him."<sup>3</sup>

**The Traitor denounced** (xiii. 21-30). The thought of the coming treachery excited in our blessed Lord's spirit one of those deep agonies, which seem not to have been unfrequent in His earthly life.<sup>4</sup> With visible signs of emotion, He now plainly denounced one of His Apostles as the Traitor. Unable to rest under such an imputation, each true-hearted disciple exclaimed, in conscious innocence, "Lord, is it I?"<sup>5</sup>

The very places of our Lord, and at least three of His disciples, may be conjectured from St. John's narrative. All were reclining on the left elbow, as was customary with the Jews at meal-time. John, the beloved disciple, was leaning on Jesus' bosom,—that is, he occupied the next place to Jesus ; so that, in leaning back<sup>6</sup> to speak to Him, his head would

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gal. vi. 1, 2. The act of His Master was, no doubt, constantly in the recollection of St. Peter. See his apparent allusion to it in 1 Peter v. 5, R.V., as compared with John xiii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> John xiii. 17, R.V.

<sup>3</sup> Psa. xli. 9. Thus we see how full the Psalms are of Christ, even perhaps where we should not have expected it.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John xi. 33, xii. 27. See note 2, p. 397.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxvi. 22.

<sup>6</sup> R.V. attempts, with some success, by its rendering of verses 23 and 25, to mark the change of posture in St. John, when he asked his question of the Lord, and thus to impart to the English the vividness of the Greek narrative. The Apostle was reclining, and then to ask his question,



almost touch the breast of the Lord. Judas, it would seem, was also very near our Lord, for when he said, "Lord, is it I?" and Christ replied "Yes," the rest of the disciples appear not to have heard the question or answer. Peter, perhaps, faced John, and so was able to beckon to him when, in that gesture, his great desire to ascertain the name of the traitor found expression.

Then John, understanding the sign, asked, as he leant back on Jesus' breast, "Who is it, Lord?" and Jesus answered, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it;" and after He had dipped the sop of unleavened bread, mingled with bitter herbs, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.

Satan had put it into his heart, as St. John tells us, to betray his Master, and he had made his bargain with the chief priests; but up to this point he had not, we may suppose, entirely resigned himself to the will of the evil one. The giving of the sop may have been, as some have thought, our Lord's last appeal to him. It was his last opportunity of return, and he threw it away. He hardened his heart, so that "after the sop Satan entered into him."

Our Lord knew it, and desired that he should no longer remain in His presence. His infinite purity shrunk from further contact with the polluted and reprobate disciple. Hence His command, "What thou doest do quickly." "I not merely suffer it: I command thee to do it quickly now. Thou willest it; I also will it. Get thee hence."<sup>1</sup>

He obeyed; for "having received the sop he went  
threw his head back on the bosom of the Lord and looked up into His face. A.V. misses this.

<sup>1</sup> Stier.



immediately out," though the disciples knew neither his purpose nor destination.<sup>1</sup> Some of them supposed it was to buy things for the feast, or that perchance Jesus had sent him forth on some errand of mercy to the poor. But his purpose was far different, as he hastened on through the night to prepare his plans in concert with the chief priests and Pharisees.

<sup>1</sup> "Not even St. John, who did not connect this injunction with the announcement which he had just received."—WESTCOTT, in *Speaker's Commentary*:

St. John "knew that Judas was the traitor, but had no idea the deed was so soon to be done."—ALFORD.



## CHAPTER XLV.

### Discourse in the Upper Chamber.

**DISCOURSE** in the Upper Chamber (xiii. 31-xiv. 31). The departure of Judas was an evident and intense relief to our Lord. It was as though the victory of humanity, in the person of its representative, the Son of Man, was already complete. But the Lord knew that this victory involved His own death, and His departure, in His bodily presence, from them. For this impending separation, He now prepared them.

In thus leaving them, He gave them a new commandment, which, if they kept would be a sign to all the world that He, their Master, was present with them still. Its fulfilment would be a greater witness to the world than even the power of doing mighty works. The commandment was old in form. In words it had been given long before.<sup>1</sup> But it was new, because its fulfilment involved the following the example of the self-sacrificing love of Christ, of which the old law knew nothing.<sup>2</sup>

For the moment the thought of their Lord's withdrawal overbore all other considerations in the minds of the disciples. St. Peter, as usual, was their spokes-

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xix. 18; Luke x. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. St. John's own comment in 1 John ii. 5-8, and see also 1 John iii. 10-15.



man. Can he not follow His Master? Is he not ready to lay down his life for that Master's sake? Yes, Jesus answered, by and by he shall follow Him, but not now. Not now, for as yet the Master had not laid down His life for the disciple. Afterwards it would be so.<sup>1</sup> For the present, instead of sacrificing himself for his master, he would deny Him, and that before the next morning broke.

We cannot wonder that the hearts of the disciples were saddened by the thought of Judas' betrayal, their Lord's departure, and St. Peter's denial. So Jesus, after perhaps a pause, went on to comfort them. He pointed out to them *three sources of comfort*.

1. The *first* (xiv. 1-11) was to be found in the thought of their Master's intimate union with His heavenly Father, and in their future admission to share in that union. The way to that admission they already knew.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas, understanding the Lord literally, was puzzled, and asked for an explanation. Jesus replied, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," and explained that He was the way, because it was through Himself only, through His death, that they could come to the Father. He was also the Truth, because, if they had rightly grasped all that His life and teaching had manifested, they would have seen God the Father revealed in Him. This started a new thought in the mind of another disciple. If only they could see the Father, said Philip, they need ask no more. It would be sufficient. The request showed that Philip, though he doubted not his Lord's divinity, had failed to under-

<sup>1</sup> This seems implied, too, in the form of the Lord's reply, "Wilt thou lay down," etc., as if He had said, "Yes, I know that thou wilt lay down thy life for My sake, thou shalt do so, but not yet."

<sup>2</sup> See R.V., which has adopted what seems to be the true reading.



stand His perfect Oneness with the Father. In reply our Lord said that to see Him was to see the Father. So perfect and entire was the Oneness between them, and so transcending all mere human examples of union between father and son, that the words of Christ and the deeds of Christ are in very truth the words and deeds of the Father.

2. The *second* source (xiv. 12-21) of comfort was in the thought of their continued union with their Master, notwithstanding the removal of His bodily presence.<sup>1</sup> This union would be realized in three ways : (a) in His answers to their prayers (vv. 13, 14) ; (b) in the presence with them of the Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup> (vv. 16, 17), and (c) in Christ's own presence with them, whereby they shall know more clearly about Him than before (vv. 18-21). This presence of their Lord with them will be as a living spirit within them, and thus, though the world should see Him no more, they should understand how He is not only the Way and the Truth, but the Life also. Yet this sense of His presence with them, internally, will depend upon two things—their obedience and their love ; their love will be the source of their obedience, and their obedience the proof of their love (vv. 15, 21).

3. The *third* source (xiv. 22-31) of comfort is derived from the thought of what would be the fruit of this loving obedience. It would be spiritual progress. This is brought out by the question of Judas,<sup>3</sup> as to

<sup>1</sup> The "greater works," of ver. 12, which Jesus would do through them were not to be miracles of a more extraordinary kind, but, as St. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, they would be followed by greater spiritual effects.

<sup>2</sup> See note at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The "Lebbæus" of Matt. x. 3. Cf. Mark iii. 18 ; Luke vi. 16 ; Acts i. 13.



why the Lord would manifest Himself to them and not unto the world. The Lord answered in effect that love and obedience are the necessary conditions of a man's power to receive any revelation from God. They are called forth by the sense of the presence of an Object, whom to love and obey. That Object, with the disciple, is his Master, Jesus Christ, whose presence is realized through the Holy Ghost (ver. 16). But where the Holy Ghost is, there, of necessity, is increase of knowledge and spiritual growth (ver. 26). Where love then and obedience are, there too comes by degrees knowledge ; and through these three, the disciple is not only comforted by his Lord's bodily absence, but is able to know more about his Lord, than if He were present in the flesh.

In bringing the discourse to a close, our Lord promised to leave His peace with them, and assured them once again of His return. Had they indeed thought more of Him, and less of themselves, and their own sorrow, they would have rejoiced in His return to the Father, Who, in His Glory is greater than the Son in His humiliation. Before that return there would be one more conflict with Satan, "the prince of this world." But the attack would be unavailing. All that Christ did was done out of love, and in obedience, to His heavenly Father.

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*NOTE.*

**On the Word "Paraclete."**

This word is peculiar to St. John. It occurs four times in his Gospel (xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7), and once in his first Epistle (ii. 1). In the Gospel the word is applied to the Holy Ghost ; in the Epistle, to our Lord. It means "one who is called to



the side of another." It is exactly represented in Latin by the word "Advocate." The person thus called to another's side may be so either (1) to advise him, and so to plead for him, or (2) to comfort and console him. In the first sense, of one pleading for another, the word is undoubtedly used in 1 John ii. 1. The second sense is that which seems better to suit the use of the word in the Gospel. There may, however, be in the thought of "the Comforter" the thought of one who pleads not *for* us, but *with* us, leading us to forsake evil, and so to be comforted.



## *CHAPTER XLVI.*

### **Discourse on the Way to the Mount of Olives.**

**D**ISCOURSE on the Way to the Mount of Olives (xv.-xvi.). As Jesus finished the discourse, which we considered in our last chapter, He summoned His disciples to leave the Upper Chamber, and, as we infer from what followed, to accompany Him over the brook Cedron to a well-known garden on the slopes of Olivet.

The discourse which followed may, as some think, have been spoken in the Upper Chamber, while they still lingered, standing ready to depart.<sup>1</sup> Or, if the high priestly prayer of chapter xvii. was offered up in the Temple Court, as some suppose, then the discourse may have been spoken on the way thither, as the little company threaded the narrow streets of the city.

Be this as it may, the object of our Lord in resuming the discourse was still to comfort His disciples under the pressure of the thought of His departure. He had already taught them that notwithstanding outward separation there would be a most real

<sup>1</sup> Chapter xviii. 1, seems to support this view. But the words "went forth," etc., of this verse may well be explained of the Lord's leaving the city. In that case, the second view mentioned above is the more likely.



spiritual union continuing between them and Himself. The Lord now went on to give them a vivid illustration of the living and intimate nature of that union, and then explained to them what would be some of its results. He concluded with cheering words of assured victory.

**The True Vine** (xv. 1-10). 1. First, then, Jesus spoke of the union between Himself and them. He took probably, as He was wont, His illustration from some suggestive sight close at hand, either from some vine trailing over the walls of the house, or perhaps from the golden vine, type of the Jewish people,<sup>1</sup> carved upon the Temple gates.<sup>2</sup> To the Jew, indeed, the vine was the symbol of the national life of his people. Judæa was the land of the vine. On its hill sides and table-lands vineyards with their walls and watch-towers were everywhere seen. Such a simile, then, would at once arrest the attention of the disciples.

And when their Master described Himself as the true Vine, they would remember how, in the Old Testament, the nation itself was often spoken of as a vine. It was the vine which the Lord had brought out of Egypt, and planted in Canaan.<sup>3</sup> The house of Israel was the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.<sup>4</sup>

But the Jewish nation, considered in its spiritual aspect, as a vine sustaining the religious life of its members, could only, at its best, foreshadow the true

<sup>1</sup> The same device was seen on the coins of the Maccabees, and upon Jewish tombstones.

<sup>2</sup> Others have suggested the sight of the fires made with the spring prunings of the vineyards in the outskirts of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Psa. lxxx. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Isa. xxvii. 2; Jer. ii. 21; Matt. xxi. 33



vine, of which it was but a type, all the more imperfect because it failed to maintain its purity and holiness. The true vine is Jesus Christ in His human nature.<sup>1</sup>

The symbol of the vine would enable the disciples to grasp, if at first only imperfectly, the intimate union betwixt their Master and themselves. They would think of the freely flowing sap running into all the branches and sustaining their life : "the Word"<sup>2</sup> of their Lord had been such a sap to them. But they would think, too, of the sometimes luxuriant branch, with its wealth of leaves, and paucity or barrenness of fruit, and gather from their Lord's words that if there should be any severance of the union between Him and them, it would not come of His departure, but of their own shortcomings. The Father, who is the Husbandman, would cut away, not any branch at His pleasure, but any that bore no fruit.

Nor could their life be sustained unless, as branches, they abode in Him. Abiding in Him meant continuing in His love, and the one condition of this continuance is obedience to His Word.

## 2. The Results of the Union between Christ and His Disciples (xv. 11-xvi. 7). The

<sup>1</sup> In the Greek language, the two words used for true, *Alethes* and *Alethinos*, represent two ideas that are wholly distinct, namely, the true as opposed to the false, and the true as distinguished from the typical and imperfect.

Formerly this distinction was preserved in our language ; the true as opposed to the false being expressed by the word *true*, and the true as distinguished from the imperfect by the word "*very* ;" as for example in the "very God of very God" of the Nicene Creed ; and in Wickliffe's Bible we read, "I am a *verri* vine."

Our Lord was the *true* Vine in this latter sense. He is the true or *perfect* Vine as distinguished from the imperfect or typical vine, which was seen in the Jewish Church and nation.

<sup>2</sup> John xv. 3.



Lord having thus pictured the close relationship between Himself and His disciples, went on to point out some of its results. The maintenance of the relationship depended upon obedience to His commandment. This had been already given.<sup>1</sup> It is now repeated. "This is My Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." Obedience to this would have two results.

(a) It would affect their relation to Himself (xv. 11-16), because they would learn to act from the same spirit of self-sacrifice as He had done in laying down His life for them. Obedience would raise them into the position of His friends, "whom He had taken into His confidence, choosing them, not they Him : they might claim His friendship in their prayers to His Father."

(b) It would affect their relation to the world (xv. 17-xvi. 7). They would be sharers in that hatred with which the world, because of His works, and of the witness which He had borne to The Father, hated Him.<sup>2</sup> Yet that witness would continue to be borne, even though He, in bodily presence, should be withdrawn. The Spirit of Truth would testify to men's hearts and consciences of Christ, and they, too, because they had seen and known Him through all His ministry, should share in, and be the mouthpieces of, that witness.

The hatred of the world moreover would be fierce and uncompromising. It would be a zeal wrongly directed. In killing Christ's disciples men would think that they were doing God service. Of all this,

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Our Lord quotes Psa. xxxv. 19, lxix. 4. The word in the LXX. for "without a cause" means "gratuitously."



the Lord warned them, lest their faith should be shaken,<sup>1</sup> and that especially by the wilful rejection of their Master by their own countrymen.

**3. Office of the Comforter in regard to the World and the Disciples (xvi. 7-15).** These warnings seem to have depressed the hearts of the disciples more than ever. They had no care to inquire about the place to which their Lord was going. The thought of His departure utterly discouraged them. Sorrow filled their heart. Our Lord therefore turned from warnings of coming suffering to fresh words of comfort. It was expedient, He said, that He should leave them, because then He would send the Comforter unto them. The Lord went on to explain to them something of the Office and Work of the Comforter.

(a) *In regard to the world.* The Comforter would convict the world, by His clear exposition of the truth, of its own sinfulness, of Christ's righteousness, and that of every man whose life is "governed by faith in an unseen Lord," and of the judgment then passing on the Prince of this world, the Devil. Thus the Truth would be presented to the world. Its presentation would bring with it life or death. It would be a call to repentance and acceptance of Christ as the Saviour, the Son of God and of Man, and its rejection would carry with it, its own condemnation.<sup>2</sup> What would be

<sup>1</sup> The image is that of stumbling over some obstacle. Cf. John vi. 61; Matt. xiii. 21, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Acts ii. 13, 41. The work of the Comforter in regard to the world receives abundant illustration from St. John's Gospel. For the *Conviction of Sin*, see John iii. 19-21, v. 28, 29, 38-47, viii. 21-24, 34-47, ix. 41, xv. 18-24.

*Conviction of Righteousness*, John v. 30, vii. 18, 24, viii. 28, 46, 50, 54, xii. 32, xiv. 31, xviii. 37.

*Conviction of Judgment*, xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvii. 15.



the effect of the conviction of the world by the comforter, our Lord left undetermined.

(b) *In regard to the disciples.* Their Master had taught them much already. But there were many things yet for them to learn for which, in their present spiritual condition, they were not ripe. The Office therefore of the Comforter would be to carry on in their hearts the work which Christ had begun. In a former discourse the Lord had said of Himself, that He, as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, does whatsoever He seeth the Father do, that is, He reveals the Father to men.<sup>1</sup> He now went a step further. When He had withdrawn His bodily presence, the Third Person, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, would be the Revealer of the Son to men. "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Thus to those who followed Him, He would be a sure guide, leading them into a continually increasing knowledge of the Truth, which is Christ Himself, and unfolding to them the things of the New Dispensation, which had been hidden from the ages and generations which had gone before.<sup>2</sup>

**4. Results of Christ's Departure** (xvi. 16-33). Jesus closed this great discourse by assuring His disciples of future joy and victory, although the present was over-clouded with sorrow, and apparent defeat.

Using two different words, the one to express the withdrawal of his bodily presence, and the other His return to them spiritually,<sup>3</sup> our Lord meant them to understand that when he had exchanged the life in

<sup>1</sup> John v. 19. Cf. John xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 26.

<sup>3</sup> These two words in ver. 16 are both rendered "see" in A.V. In R.V. the distinction is drawn, "ye shall behold"—"ye shall see."



this world for the life beyond the veil, He would be present with them as ever, only far more powerfully, for they would see him with the eye of faith.

Their Master's words were perplexing to the disciples. For the present, they could neither understand the conditions of the departure, nor the reason for it. Jesus bade them wait. The present was a time of sorrow, but the revelation of Himself which He would make to them would turn their sorrow into joy. Of their present comfort in their Lord's presence, the world might deprive them, but that new-found joy in His spiritual presence, no man could take from them. Nor would they have need then to ask Him any more questions,<sup>1</sup> for after His resurrection and return to the Father, the Holy Ghost would so clearly reveal all things to them, that what was unintelligible to them now, or veiled under figures, would be so no more.

Moreover, prayer made to His heavenly Father in Christ's name would be certain of an answer, and that not because Christ would plead for them, but because the Father Himself loved them, for they had believed in the Divine Mission of His Son.

Jesus went on to speak to them of His own pre-existence. They thought His words were a response to their own unspoken questions, and imagined that all was now clear. They forgot the Lord's injunction to wait. Very gently He rebuked them, and, that they might understand how little they as yet grasped of His full meaning, told them of the quickly approach-

<sup>1</sup> The words translated "ask" in xvi. 23, are different. The first means "to ask questions," the second means rather "to pray." So in verses 5, and 30, to "ask" means to "ask questions." In verse 26, the word is the same, and the sentence means, to "make request (ask questions) of the Father about you." See R.V., margin.



ing moment when, to all appearance, His cause and theirs would be utterly defeated.

Yet in the moment of seeming defeat, victory was sure. The Father was always with the Son of His love, and that Son, as a Conqueror, had already overcome the world, and opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

### The High Priestly Prayer.

THE solemn hours of discourse with His disciples after the Last Supper were closed by that prayer of Jesus to His heavenly Father, which St. John has been permitted to record for our comfort and instruction.

The prayer was evidently spoken aloud, but whether, as some think, in the Temple Court, it is impossible to say.<sup>1</sup> It is at once a prayer to the Father, and a revelation to us. It forms a chapter in the history of our Lord's ministry which is unlike any other, and which must have made the deepest possible impression upon those who heard it.

The prayer has three main divisions. Our Lord prayed (1) for Himself, (2) for His disciples, (3) for His Church.<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Prayer for Himself* (xvii. 1-5). To the eye of Christ all things are naked and open. The present and the future are alike known. Therefore in the opening of His prayer, Jesus regarded His Death and Resurrection as already past, and the hour of glorification to be come. The power, which had been given Him by the Father, had been so exercised by the

<sup>1</sup> See previous chapter, page 410.

<sup>2</sup> "In the whole of Scripture this chapter is the easiest in words, the deepest in meaning."—BENGEL.



Son, that "those whom the Father had given Him" had been set on the way to win that eternal life, which comes of that knowledge of the Father and of the Son, which is striven for and grown into. The work thus potentially, though not yet actually, finished,<sup>1</sup> the Son prays that the result may now follow, His restoration to that glory, laid aside for a time, which had been His from all eternity.

2. *The Prayer for His Disciples* (xvii. 6-19). These disciples had accepted the revelation which the Son had made to them of the Father, and had believed that the Father had sent Him. The Son was about to return to the Father, but the disciples would remain in the world. Their Master therefore prayed for them that, as He had kept them safely, except only the son of perdition,<sup>2</sup> so now His heavenly Father would keep them. They would have spiritual joy in the thought of their Lord's accomplished work, but they were hated by the world, even as He, and would meet only with conflict from it and persecution. They would need their Father's protecting care, and for this their Master now prayed. He would give pledge and security, as it were, for them. He would sanctify and consecrate Himself by the surrender of His life for them, that they too might be truly<sup>3</sup> consecrated to God.

3. *The Prayer for the Church* (xvii. 20-26). The Lord went on to pray for all future believers in His name. As His first thought had been for the "unity" of His own immediate disciples (ver. 11), so is it also

<sup>1</sup> Compare verses 1 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> We need not understand by our Lord's words that Judas had ever been one of those whom the Father had given Him.

<sup>3</sup> The "in truth" of R.V. gives the sense better than "through the truth" of A.V., but perhaps it is still better expressed as above by "truly."



for His Church at large. And what an unity ! As that of the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father. One body, though many members, one body, animated by one Spirit, united in one Lord, holding one faith, each member admitted once for all into the body, and all adoring the one God and Father of all. This unity would bring conviction to the world. And more than this. The glory of the Son was His union with the Father and His perfect accomplishment of His work. So the glory of the Church would be in its union with Christ, and in its fulfilment of His work.

And to what would that fulfilment lead ? In what would be the glory ? It would be the beatific vision. The beholding the Master's glory. The seeing Him as He is.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus concluded His prayer by gathering it, so to speak, all up together. The world was ignorant of the Father, but Christ, the Son, knew Him, and had declared Him, and the disciples had believed on Him. And now through them the work was to be continued to the end of the world. They were to be His representatives, filled with that same love with which the Father had ever and always loved the Son.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 2. A deeply interesting comment on this part of our Lord's prayer.



## *CHAPTER XLVIII.*

### **The Betrayal and Preliminary Examinations.**

THE BETRAYAL—EXAMINATION BEFORE ANNAS—  
EXAMINATION BEFORE CAIAPHAS—DENIAL BY  
ST. PETER.

**THE Betrayal** (xviii. 1-12). With minds solemnized by their Lord's last words of comfort and exhortation, by that heavenly prayer in which He had commended them to the Father, by His own example of holy resignation, the disciples followed Him as He left the city by the gate corresponding to the one now called St. Stephen's, and went down the steep descent of the Temple hill, across the dark rocky valley of the Kedron, to a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives, whither, St. John tells us, "Jesus oftentimes resorted with His disciples." The other Evangelists tell us that its name was Gethsemane. It was an olive garden, with probably a dwelling-house, a press and a tower ; and we may suppose that the owner of it was friendly to Him Who was wont to seek its solitude.

In considering St. John's narrative of our Lord's Betrayal, Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection, we must carefully remember the purpose which he tells us he had in view.

That purpose was threefold :—



1. That we might believe that Jesus is the CHRIST, the long-expected and long-desired Messiah ;

2. That we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Word, Who was God, made flesh and dwelling amongst men ;

3. That this belief in Jesus as very God and very Man might result in our having life through His Name."<sup>1</sup>

This will often help us to understand the reason of the Evangelist's choice in his record of some incidents, and his omission of others.<sup>2</sup>

In the narrative of the Betrayal, St. John's account is mostly peculiar to itself, not so much supplementing the other accounts as bringing into greater prominence one or two points in which the dignity and power of the Lord were specially shown. Omitting the kiss of betrayal, St. John tells us of that majestic bearing before which His captors quailed ;<sup>3</sup> of His considerate care for his disciples ; and, although saying nothing of the Agony in the Garden, he refers to it in the words of our Lord to St. Peter, given only by himself ; —“ The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? ”<sup>4</sup>

### **The Examination before Annas (xviii. 13-**

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 31.

<sup>2</sup> We may remember also that St. John presupposes the narratives of the three earlier Gospels to be well known, and omits therefore the narration of many incidents already recorded by them, and which perhaps seemed to him to bear less upon his especial purpose.

<sup>3</sup> The distinction between the band (of Roman soldiers) and the officers (or police, of the Sanhedrin) is observed only by St. John.

<sup>4</sup> St. John alone mentions the name of the disciple, and the name of the man whom he attacked. The earlier Evangelists suppressed the names, for obvious reasons, St. Peter being still alive. For St. John no such reason existed. There is also the possibility that St. John, being one of “ the Three,” and being “ known unto the high priest,” whose servant Malchus was, was possessed of information which he had not confided to his fellow Apostles. For the image of the “ cup ” cf. Ps. xxiii. 5 ; Jer. xxv. 15 ; Ezek. xxiii. 31-33, etc.



24). This was a preliminary examination, of an informal character, to give time perhaps for the assembling of the Sanhedrin. It is recorded only by St. John. Annas, although not now the High Priest, had previously held the office, and was probably still regarded by the Jews as the legitimate high priest. His connection, too, with Caiaphas, who had been made high priest by the Romans, gave him doubtless all the greater influence. Annas still occupied rooms in the same palace with Caiaphas.<sup>1</sup>

In the examination before Annas,<sup>2</sup> Jesus was questioned on two points, His disciples and His doctrine. In His reply, our Lord, taking no notice of the first point, concentrated attention upon Himself. Annas had implied, it would seem, that Jesus had imparted a secret doctrine to His disciples of a dangerous character. This our Lord distinctly denied,<sup>3</sup> and appealed to the witnesses who ought to have been called, those who had heard His teaching in the temple and elsewhere.

The answer was not only a denial of the high priest's suspicions, but conveyed a reproof of the secrecy and underhand proceedings of which the Lord was the victim. It excited the anger, as we may suppose, of the unscrupulous judge, for "one of the officers" (or servants), "which stood by," pretending that the Lord's answer was wanting in respect, "struck Him with the palm of his hand saying, "Answerest Thou the High Priest so?" Christ's reply was, in effect, an appeal to the servant, to bear true evidence and not to resort to violence.

<sup>1</sup> And retained, by courtesy, the title of High Priest (Luke iii. 2; Acts iv. 6).

<sup>2</sup> From verses 13, 15, 24, it is thought that Caiaphas was present at this examination, and took the lead in it. This may have been so, but see Luke iii. 2; Acts iv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Matt. x. 27.



**The Examination before Caiaphas** (xviii. 24). The examination by Annas being thus concluded, our Lord was sent to Caiaphas.<sup>1</sup> A second informal, though more official, examination of the Lord was now held,<sup>2</sup> but St. John alludes to it in the briefest fashion.

**St. Peter's Denial of his Master** (xviii. 16, 17, 25-27). Whilst these examinations were proceeding, the servants and attendants were gathered in a crowd around the fire which had been lighted in the courtyard of the palace for the sake of warmth in the chilly spring night. Amongst them stood Peter. The Apostle had obtained admission into the courtyard through the friendly offices of St. John, who had some acquaintance with the authorities of the palace. The light of the fire, gleaming on his face, caused him to be recognized and challenged as a disciple of the Accused. One, indeed, had seen him standing in the garden, close to Jesus. Thrice, as we know, did the disciple deny his Master. St. John, however, with St. Luke, omits the oaths by which St. Peter sought to strengthen his denial, and so increased, if possible, his offence. Of the Apostle's repentance St. John makes no mention. But it was brought about by that look which, as St. Luke tells us,<sup>3</sup> the Lord gave him as He was being led from the room of private examination to the council chamber of the Sanhedrin. Of the trial before that body St. John tells us nothing, but passes on at once to that before Pilate.

<sup>1</sup> The correct translation is undoubtedly "Annas therefore," not "Now Annas had." So R.V. is right, A.V. wrong.

<sup>2</sup> This is clear by comparing Luke xxii. 61-65.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 61.



## CHAPTER XLIX.

### The Trial before Pilate.

**C**HRIST led to the Prætorium: *Pilate and the Jews outside* (xviii. 28-32). The Roman capital of Palestine was Cæsarea, a magnificent city on the sea-coast about seventy miles from Jerusalem. It was the head-quarters of the Roman soldiery, and the ordinary residence of the Roman procurator or governor. But at the national festivals he always came to Jerusalem with a strong military escort, for the double purpose of quelling, if need be, any popular tumult that might arise at this period of religious and political excitement, and to parade at the same time the power and authority of the Roman masters of the country. To Jerusalem came also, at these seasons, all the great men of the Jewish people.

It was close upon sunrise when the ecclesiastical rulers hurried our Lord from the chamber of the Sanhedrin, across the temple area, to the judgment-hall or prætorium of the Roman Governor.

The rulers would not enter into the prætorium, "lest," as St. John says, "they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover."<sup>1</sup> Pilate, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> The Passover Supper was, by the law, to be eaten after sunset of Nisan 14th, *i.e.* as we should say, of Good Friday. Our Lord therefore had, of necessity, anticipated the legal time by some eighteen or twenty hours.



went out to them, and demanded, formally, the nature of the charge preferred against the Prisoner. The question offended the Jews, who, jealous of their own authority, and impatient at even a momentary check to their evil purpose, showed, by their answer, that they had expected the ratification of the sentence at once, and without question. But Pilate was not inclined to act as their tool, and absolutely refused to confirm their sentence without further inquiry.

He answered them ironically, "Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law." This compelled the Jews to acknowledge that what they wanted was the Prisoner's death, and this they could not inflict. Their own punishment for the capital offence of blasphemy would have been stoning, but Judæa being part of a Roman province, every sentence of death required, before it could be carried out, the confirmation of the Governor.<sup>1</sup> Hence Jesus was handed over to Pilate to be put to death in the Roman manner, which, for one who was not a Roman citizen, was crucifixion. Our Lord's words were thus fulfilled.

*First interview of Pilate with Christ within the Prætorium* (xviii. 33-38a).—In order, as we may suppose, to quicken Pilate's action, the Jews now, as we learn from St. Luke,<sup>2</sup> preferred against Jesus as one who claimed to be a King, the charge of treason against Cæsar. Urged by the vehemence of the Jews, and with a view to investigate this charge, Pilate retired within the Prætorium, and proceeded to examine the Lord, Who was already within the court. Calling Jesus before him, Pilate asked Him whether He was the King of the Jews.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Pilate's object in withdrawing within the judgment hall was not



Pilate, of course, used the term "king" in the ordinary temporal sense of the word. The Lord's reply was intended, doubtless, to open the way for explaining to Pilate that He was indeed a King, but that His kingdom was a theocracy, of no mere worldly type. "Sayest thou," the Lord said, "this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Pilate's reply expressed his utter indifference to the whole matter, from a Jewish point of view. Yet, knowing the people with whom he had to do, and their proneness to adopt any pretender who might give them a hope of renewed independence, he naturally supposed that there must be some special feature in the case before him to have led the Jewish authorities to be so jealous of the supposed pretensions of the Prisoner.<sup>1</sup> "What," he asked, therefore, "hast Thou done?"

Our Lord, in reply, assured Pilate that He had done nothing of which Pilate, as a Roman magistrate, need be in the least afraid. He was a King, and He had a kingdom, which was *in* the world, it was true, but it was not *of* the world, not of a worldly sort.<sup>2</sup> Had it been of an ordinary worldly type, His servants would even then have been fighting for Him, and rescuing Him from the hands of His foes.

By His kingdom, Jesus Christ meant His Church. By the mention of "His servants," He clearly shows that He did not mean an invisible kingdom merely, in men's hearts, but a kingdom with an outward, visible organization. At the same time, although "kings were to be nursing fathers and queens the nursing mothers"<sup>3</sup> of His Church, or kingdom, the

secresy, which would have been contrary to Roman law, but quiet. He wished to examine Jesus undisturbed by the clamour outside.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark xv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John xvii. 11, 15, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xlix. 23.



Lord as clearly laid it down that His Church must not, and by its very nature cannot, depend upon the powers of this world for support.

Pilate evidently regarded our Lord's answer as that of a mere enthusiast. "Thou art a king, then?" he said. There was scorn in these words, as the proud Roman governor looked upon the apparently helpless Prisoner before him. And then, no doubt, something of wonder, too. What sort of kingdom could this be, which was neither of this world, nor resting upon this world's forces?

The Lord's answer was plain. His kingdom rested upon the power and force of the Truth. That men should once more acknowledge its dominion, He had come into the world. "And every one, who is seeking the Truth," our Lord said in effect, "will acknowledge the persuasiveness of My witness, and become My subject."<sup>1</sup>

With the tone of sadness which is so apt to pervade the spirit of scepticism, and with a tinge of mockery, Pilate asked "What is Truth?" and then, glad very likely to break off a conversation which was taking so different a turn from anything he had expected, Pilate went out again unto the people.

*Pilate and the Jews again* (xviii. 38b.-xix. 7). To them he decisively gave his judgment, that he found no fault at all in the Prisoner. The outcry upon this, as St. Luke tells us, was the more fierce, and resulted in the sending of Jesus to Herod Antipas, Pilate thus hoping to shift the responsibility from himself.<sup>2</sup> He was a weak man, and so, when the Prisoner was returned upon his hands by Herod, Pilate attempted

<sup>1</sup> With our Lord's answer cf. John viii. 47, and see 1 Tim. vi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 7.



to enlist the people on his side by proposing to release Jesus. He probably knew of the enthusiastic reception which Jesus had met with at their hands only on the Sunday before. He was unprepared, therefore, we may believe, for the change of feeling which, at the instigation of their rulers, prompted the people to demand the release of Barabbas, a noted outlaw and violent opponent of the Roman power, instead of that of Jesus Christ.

Yet he hoped still to content the people, and to save the life of his Prisoner. With a view to excite their pity, Pilate "scourged Jesus,"<sup>1</sup> permitted his soldiers to crown Him with thorns, and to mock Him with pretended homage, and then, leading the Lord forth, bruised and bleeding, presented Him to the multitude with the words, "Behold the Man."

But Pilate's hope was again disappointed. Instead of any pity being excited, the cry arose, from the chief priests and their attendants, more fiercely than ever, "Crucify Him!" The remonstrances of the Governor were in vain. "Take ye Him," he said, "and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

The Lord's enemies now shifted their ground. Waiving the charge of treason, they told Pilate that Jesus ought to die, because, according to their law, He had been guilty of blasphemy, in having claimed to be the Son of God. This fresh accusation excited anew the fears of Pilate,<sup>2</sup> and once more he retired within the judgment hall to speak with the Accused.

*Second interview of Pilate with Christ* (xix. 8-11). To the Governor's question, "Whence art Thou?"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke xxiii. 16. "Scourging" was part of the punishment awarded to criminals condemned to death, but in the case of our Lord it seems to have been inflicted by Pilate arbitrarily.

Already aroused by the message of his wife (Matt. xxvii. 19).



Jesus gave no answer. To such an one as Pilate, who was no seeker after truth, no further revelation than that which had been already given to him<sup>1</sup> could be made. Pilate, secretly quailing before the divine serenity of Jesus Christ, tried now to assume an air of offended dignity. His words called forth an answer from our Lord. Pilate had the power he claimed, but it was owing, Christ assured him, to the providence of God, which had, in reality, placed him where he was. At the same time, the Lord acknowledged that Pilate's guilt was less than that of Caiaphas and his friends, inasmuch as he had done nothing to bring about the trial.

*The Sentence* (xix. 12-16). Jesus Christ's answer inclined Pilate still more in His favour. But his efforts were unavailing, for he had no real courage. He could not brave the insinuation that, in releasing Christ, he would be placing himself in antagonism to Cæsar. So the chief Priests got their way. Mounting on the wooden platform of judgment, placed for the purpose outside the Prætorium, Pilate gave his sentence. "Behold your King," he mockingly said to the Jews, to be met with the fierce retort, "Crucify Him!" With a bitter irony and contempt, he said again, "Shall I crucify your King?" In their answer, "We have no king, but Cæsar," the Jewish nation, in the persons of their rulers, openly renounced their allegiance to Jehovah, rejected their Messiah, and consummated their national apostacy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Unconsciously fulfilling Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix. 10).



## NOTE.

**On the Words, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (John xviii. 31).**

Some have supposed that the Jews meant that the holiness of the season of the Passover precluded them from putting any one to death.

But Lightfoot thinks they meant that they had lost the *jus gladii*, or power of life and death. Quoting from the Talmud, he says that judgment in capital causes was taken from the Sanhedrin about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

The difficulty suggested by the stoning of Stephen seems to be met by the answer that that was an irregular thing, brought about by a sudden popular tumult.

The narrative of St. John leaves no doubt that both Pilate and the Jews regarded the question of life and death as in the power of the governor alone. The Jews, too, evidently wished our Lord to be condemned by Pilate on a charge of treason against the civil power. When, for the moment, the charge seemed to be breaking down, they urged blasphemy as the reason for a capital sentence. When this, too, broke down, they returned to their first charge, and this time with fatal effect. By the condemnation for treason, death by the Roman method would be secured, and thus our Lord's words be fulfilled,



## CHAPTER L.

### The Life laid down.

THE CRUCIFIXION—THE TITLE—THE PARTED RAIMENT—THE VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN—"I THIRST"—THE DEATH—THE PIERCED SIDE—THE BURIAL.

**THE Crucifixion** (xix. 17, 18). St. John tells us that when Pilate took his seat on the judicial throne to give judgment against our Lord, it was "about the sixth hour." St. Mark says, "it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." The three earlier Evangelists, in harmony with St. Mark's date, relate that there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour, the darkness not beginning until some time after our Lord was nailed to the Cross.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Jewish method of reckoning the hours from six to six, St. Mark's third hour would be 9 a.m. If St. John adhered to the same method of computation, his sixth hour would answer to our noon. This apparent discrepancy between St. Mark and St. John has been variously reconciled. Some think that St. John's words, "*about* the sixth hour," may be taken to mean "toward noon," and may be satisfied by St. Mark's words, remembering that he refers to the time when Pilate's sentence was given, and our Lord handed

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 25, 33; Luke xxiii. 44.



over to the soldiers. Besides before the sentence could be carried out, some time must necessarily elapse. This might perhaps bring the two Evangelists into harmony, especially when we remember that among the ancients, the hours were not so accurately divided as with us.

On the other hand, it is thought by some that St. John adopted a system of counting the hours similar to our own, so that his sixth hour means six o'clock in the morning.<sup>1</sup> To this it may be objected that it is highly improbable that the interview with Herod, and the lengthened trial before Pilate could have both been concluded by so early an hour, whereas St. Mark's addition of three hours would give time for all.

The difficulty would be much more completely solved if we might adopt the not improbable suggestion, supported by two good MSS., that the Greek numeral for *six* in St. John's Gospel has, by an error, been substituted for *three*.

Whatever may be the actual solution of a difficulty, which, did we know all, would be no difficulty at all, we may be quite sure that the Jewish rulers wished to hurry forward our Lord's crucifixion with as little loss of time as possible, for the day was the Preparation Day, on which the lambs must be slain for the Pass-over Feast, which in that year was coincident with the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

As soon, therefore, as Pilate had passed sentence, "they took Jesus and led Him away."

St. John alone tells us that Jesus at first bore His cross, but we know from the other Gospels that it was afterwards transferred to Simon of Cyrene, doubtless

<sup>1</sup> John i. 39, iv. 6, 52, are not inconsistent with this view, although they agree better with the other.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the commonly received meaning of John xix. 31. "That sabbath day was an high day."



because our Lord was unable any longer to support the load.

The procession moved on to Golgotha, a place outside the city gates,<sup>1</sup> but close to one of the busy thoroughfares of the city, and in the midst of its life and activity.<sup>2</sup> Here the cross was set up.

St. John selects seven incidents connected with the crucifixion for special mention.

**The Title** (xix. 19-22). The *first* of these is the setting up of the title over the Lord's head. St. John's account of this is much more detailed than those of the earlier Evangelists, as if he wanted to bring out into greater prominence any points of contact between Christ and the Roman Empire, the great world-power of his day.<sup>3</sup> The inscription was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, probably that all who saw it might be able to read it. But we should note, too, that these three languages represented the three great powers which affect the well-being of men, the powers of religion, civilization, and discipline.<sup>4</sup>

In affixing to the cross the words "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," Pilate gave to our Lord His rightful title, while at the same time he degraded the whole Jewish nation in the Person of their King. To the remonstrances of the chief priests, following up their victim with malignant hate, against the inscription, Pilate turned a deaf ear. Driven by the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xiii. 12. Whether on the north side of the Temple, as Fergusson thinks, or at the traditional site, close to the Church of the Holy Scripture, on the west side, is doubtful. There is much to be said in favour of the latter.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 20.

<sup>3</sup> The correctness, too, of the Apostle's report, we may remember, could be tested by a reference to the Imperial archives.

<sup>4</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.



pressure they had put upon him to condemn the Man, whom he had again and again pronounced innocent, he was determined to stand to what he had done, and decisively answered, "What I have written, I have written."

**The Raiment Parted** (xix. 23, 24). The second incident recorded by St. John is the parting of Christ's raiment among the soldiers. It was a fulfilment of a Messianic prophecy in the Psalms,<sup>1</sup> and as such St. John was inspired to mention it.<sup>2</sup>

**The Virgin and St. John** (xix. 25-27). The *third* incident had a special interest for St. John. Amongst the spectators near the cross were the Virgin Mary and St. John, as well as three others of "the faithful women."<sup>3</sup> At this hour of her sorrow, when, though highly favoured of the Lord, and blessed among women, a sword was piercing her soul,<sup>4</sup> at the sight of her Son's sufferings, the Mother of Jesus needed one on whom to lean for outward care and protection. So the Lord commended her to the care of St. John, and he tenderly and lovingly obeyed the call of his dying Master, and "took her to his own home."

**The Cry from the Cross** (xix. 28). "After this," that is, after the three hours darkness, and after the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xxii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The seamless coat was the close fitting inner tunic or vest. See R.V., margin.

<sup>3</sup> That four women are intended to be mentioned in ver. 25 seems certain. One of the ancient versions (the Syriac) inserts "and" before "Mary, *the wife* of Clopas" (R.V.), and it is not at all likely that two sisters would have had the same name. This must have been so, if only *three* women are intended. Some think that the sister of the Virgin Mary was Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of John, who would thus be the Virgin's nephew.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ii. 35.



Me," recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, the *fourth* of St. John's incidents occurred. Jesus said, "I thirst." The words were at once the natural expression of His bodily need, and the fulfilment of David's prophecy.<sup>1</sup> St. John also is careful to tell us that Christ knew that He was fulfilling prophecy. Jesus knew "that all things were now accomplished."

**The Death** (xix. 29, 30). The conflict drew to its close. In the Lord's last words, "It is finished,"<sup>2</sup> we have the fifth of St. John's incidents, a comment upon the Evangelist's assurance that Jesus knew all things. With these words He bowed His head, and surrendered, as St. Luke tells us, His spirit into His heavenly Father's hands.

Thus the will which Jesus Christ had come into the world to do was wholly accomplished. Nothing had been left undone. The Second Adam, as the representative of the whole human race, had rendered a complete obedience to God's will, and had freely and of Himself laid down His life, a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the whole world. By that sacrifice, He had won back for men the life which has been lost in the Fall, and had opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

**The Pierced Side** (xix. 31-37). The *sixth* incident of St. John forms another link in the chain of fulfilled prophecy, and its record is clearly intended as a witness to the reality of Christ's death. The Romans usually allowed those who suffered the ignominious punishment of crucifixion to linger until life slowly ebbed away. After death the bodies were left to be consumed by wild beasts or birds, or by the

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xxii. 15, lxix. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.



natural process of decay. To the Jews, such a custom was an abomination, for their law forbade the body of any one who had died the accursed death of hanging to be left "all night upon the tree."<sup>1</sup> In the case of our Lord, there were also no doubt special reasons for the speedy removal of the body. The next day was both a festival and a sabbath, and the spectacle of Christ's body, still hanging upon the cross, might have caused a revulsion of feeling in the Galilean pilgrims, and produced a tumult. Pilate therefore, with all the more readiness probably, agreed to the request of the Jewish rulers made before they knew of Christ's death,<sup>2</sup> that the death of the crucified men might be hastened by the breaking of their legs, and that their bodies might be at once removed.

The soldiers, charged with the execution of the order, found that it was needless in the case of Jesus Christ, for "He was dead already." One of them, however, to test the reality of the death, pierced the Lord's side, and "forthwith came thereout blood and water." Thus it was proved that the Victim had indeed died, and that both type and prophecy had been fulfilled. The type was that of the Paschal Lamb, and the prophecy that of Zechariah: "They shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced."<sup>3</sup>

But there was a yet further revelation in this mingled outpouring of blood and water. In the Old Testament the blood is identified with the life or soul,<sup>4</sup> and there-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 31, is in reality a completion of the narrative of the doings of the rulers, continued from ver. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xii. 46; Psa. xxxiv. 20; Zech. xii. 10. St. John also connects the prophecy of Zechariah with the second Advent (Rev. i. 7).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Gen. ix. 4. The word in Hebrew for "life" and "soul" is one and the same.



fore the outpouring of the blood was a proof that Jesus had "poured out His soul unto death," and an assurance that the "remission of sins" had been accomplished.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Scriptures adopt water as the emblem of the spiritual life,<sup>2</sup> and therefore the outpouring of the water was an earnest of the fulfilment of the Lord's promise of the Comforter, Whose coming was dependent upon Christ's death. "If I depart, I will send Him unto you."<sup>3</sup>

Christian writers have also delighted to see in this double outpouring, a picture of the two sacraments, both of which receive their efficacy and meaning only through the death of Christ. The spiritual life, symbolized by the outpoured water, is imparted in Holy Baptism, and that life is quickened and sustained by the incorporation of the Christian in the Holy Communion with the glorified humanity of His Divine Lord.

**The Burial** (xix. 38-42). This last incident of the Crucifixion is a further proof of the reality of Christ's death, and as such St. John records it. It was in the power of Pilate to allow private burial to the bodies of those who had been executed as criminals. He appears, after due inquiry as to the death having taken place,<sup>4</sup> to have readily granted the request of Joseph of Arimathea to be allowed to bury the body of the Lord.

Assisted by Nicodemus,<sup>5</sup> Joseph rapidly performed the customary embalming, and laid the body in a new

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liii. 12; Heb. ix. 22.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. John vii. 37-39; 1 Cor. x. 4; Isa. xii. 3, lv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> John xvi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xv. 44, 45.

<sup>5</sup> St. John seems to contrast this comparatively bold act of Nicodemus with his former visit of secrecy by night.



tomb, close to the scene of the crucifixion.<sup>1</sup> In this tomb, no burial had as yet been made, and therefore neither would the Lord's body contract defilement by burial therein, nor could there be any doubt, after the resurrection, as to whose body it was which had risen again.

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NOTES

**A. The Title on the Cross.**

1. The inscription on the Cross is given by the Four Evangelists as follows :—

- |             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| St. Matthew | . | This is Jesus, the King of the Jews,     |
| St. Mark    | . | The King of the Jews.                    |
| St. Luke    | . | This is the King of the Jews.            |
| St. John    | . | Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. |

**B. The Words from the Cross.**

The Evangelists have recorded seven utterances, or cries, of our Lord upon the Cross as follows :—

(a) *Before the darkness :*

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (St. Luke).
2. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (St. Luke).
3. "Woman, behold thy Son,—Behold thy mother" (St. John).

(b) *During the darkness, towards its close :*

4. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (St. Matthew and St. Mark).

(c) *At the close of the darkness :*

5. "I thirst" (St. John).
6. "It is finished" (St. John).
7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (St. Luke).

<sup>1</sup> The words, "the sepulchre was nigh at hand," are understood by some to indicate that it was regarded as only a temporary resting-place for the Lord's body.



## CHAPTER LI.

### The Resurrection.

APPEARANCES TO MARY MAGDALENE, THE TEN, THE ELEVEN, THE SEVEN—CHARGE TO ST. PETER.

**H**AD the body that was laid with such loving care in the rich man's grave continued to slumber there until it had mingled with the dust, Jesus could not have been the Messiah of Whom the prophet had said, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." And if not the Messiah, the Jews who said, "we have a law, and by our law He ought to die, *because He made Himself the Son of God,*" would have been right.

Those, then, who deny the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, take away the essential foundation of Christianity ; for, as St. Paul declares, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God ; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ : Whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."<sup>1</sup>

Happily, however, the Resurrection of Jesus is one of the best attested facts in all history ; and not the least valuable testimony to it is St. John's as recorded in his Gospel.

Every one reading St. John's narrative of the Easter

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15.



morning must see that it is that of an eye-witness. "He that *saw* bare record, and his record is true." We mark its vividness and circumstantiality, and the improbability that such a particular reference to minute details could by any possibility have been invented. The record carries conviction with it. The details, however minute, are not trivial to the loving Apostle; for they cleared away his doubts and developed his faith, while as yet he had not seen the Risen Saviour.<sup>1</sup>

Neither St. John, nor his fellow Evangelists attempt any description of the act of the resurrection, and they are all careful to record that the appearances of the Lord, made according to His own pleasure, were received at first with hesitation, and never upon mere hearsay. But the result was a firm and ever-unshaken conviction that they had "seen the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

**The Appearance to Mary Magdalene** (xix. 1-18). St. John selects for narration four of the ten or eleven appearances of Jesus to believers, after the resurrection. The first was to Mary Magdalene. She, in company with others of the faithful women who had followed the Lord from Galilee,<sup>3</sup> went early on the Sunday morning to the sepulchre "while it was yet dark," to complete the process of embalming which had been hurriedly and imperfectly performed on the Friday evening. They found the tomb not only open, but empty. Hastily seeking St. Peter and St. John, Mary Magdalene reported to them the abstraction, as she supposed, of the Lord's Body, adding, "we

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of the Faith.*

<sup>2</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Beside Mary Magdalene, three others are mentioned: Mary, the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna (Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 10).



know not where they have laid Him." Clearly no thought of a resurrection was yet in her mind.

The two Apostles, sharing in Mary's anxiety, and eager to test the truth of her statement, at once ran to the place of burial. St. John, younger perhaps and more lithesome than his friend, reached the sepulchre first. He did not, however, do more than *look* into the tomb. St. Peter, on the contrary, true to his eager disposition, *entered*, as soon as he arrived, and, though he found not the Body of the Lord, he saw the grave clothes lying there, clearly showing that no ruthless hand had robbed the tomb and stolen the Body.<sup>1</sup> St. John then took courage to enter, "and he saw and believed."<sup>2</sup> Then they returned to their lodging in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Mary remained at the tomb, weeping, her soul absorbed by thoughts about her Lord. After a while, she took courage, and herself looked into the sepulchre.<sup>3</sup> It was no longer empty. There were angels there, in white, "the livery of heaven." After a pause,<sup>4</sup> they asked her why she was weeping. Her reply showed how to her, the loss of the Lord was

<sup>1</sup> Jewish sepulchres were "usually excavated in some little cliff of rock, so that both vestibule and tomb-chamber had their floors on a level with the ground outside. The low doorway through which one passes from the first chamber into the second is closed by a rolling stone, like a millstone, rolling in a groove. On the three sides of the inner chamber are arched recesses, and in each recess a stone shelf to receive the body. The angels of ver. 12, would be seen seated in such an arched recess."

<sup>2</sup> The exact force of the word "believed" is doubtful. It seems to imply more than a mere belief now in the truth of Mary's report. And yet, for the present, "they knew not the Scripture."

<sup>3</sup> The narrative seems to imply that Mary had not, as yet, looked in, but, taking the report of one or other of the women who had done so, as true, had at once run off to the Apostles. This would be true to character.

<sup>4</sup> Marked by the use of the pronoun for "they."



intensely personal. "They have taken away *my* Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

But the Lord had approached unseen, and now Himself asked the cause of her grief, suggesting, perhaps, for her an answer by the further question, "Whom seekest thou?" The question had in it, too, something of a revelation, for to Mary's mind, in after meditation, it would be an additional proof that she was speaking to the same Master as of old. For He knew what was passing in her mind, and "needed not that any man should tell Him." But it was not till He had pronounced her name that she recognized her Lord. Then, in her great joy she would fain, as the narrative implies, have clasped His feet. The Lord repressed this external homage, and directed Mary's thoughts to something very different to the resumption of the old life of ministering to Him, to which doubtless her hopes turned. This was not to be, nor was it in this way that He would return to His disciples. Mary, and through her the Apostles, to whom Jesus Christ sent her, received now a first lesson in faith in an unseen Lord. She, and they, His brethren as He called them, were to find that He, Who was on the point of ascending to the one God and Father, would fulfil His promise made in the upper chamber, not by appearances from time to time during the forty days, but by the Pentecostal effusion of His Holy Spirit, through Whom He would be with them and His Church, even to the end of the world.

**The Appearance to the Ten** (xx. 19-25). Late in the evening of the resurrection day, after the return of the two disciples from Emmaus, the Lord appeared to His Apostles in the upper cham-



ber.<sup>1</sup> Only one, Thomas, was absent. To mark that the Lord's resurrection Body no longer obeyed the same laws as those by which we are bound, St. John carefully tells us that the doors were shut, and that Jesus suddenly stood in the midst. They were discussing the news brought them by Cleopas and his friend, when the Lord appeared, and saluted them with the words, "Peace be unto you." To prove His identity to them, He showed them His hands and His side. Thus assured, the disciples were "glad when they saw the Lord." Addressing Himself, as it would seem, especially to the Ten, Jesus Christ repeated His assurance of Peace, and confirmed to them their authority as His Apostles: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." The words were accompanied by a solemn and significant act. It was the breathing into their souls the breath of the new life of the Spirit, an earnest of the fuller gift of the coming Pentecost. At the same time, He committed to them and to His Church the exercise of a godly discipline, the power of admitting to Church privileges, to Church fellowship and to the sacraments, and of excluding from these things;—the remitting and retaining of sins, answering to the "loosing and binding" spoken of in St. Matthew.<sup>2</sup>

When Thomas rejoined his brethren the Lord had withdrawn again His bodily presence. They eagerly told him of what had taken place, but true to the

<sup>1</sup> About eight or nine p.m. probably. Cf. Luke xxiv. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18. See Barrow on *The Power of the Keys*, and Bishop Wilson. "The exercise of the power must be placed in the closest connection with the faculty of spiritual discernment consequent upon the gift of the Holy Spirit."—Professor Westcott in *Speaker's Commentary*. For examples of its exercise we may refer to the exclusion of Ananias (Acts v.) and the admission of Cornelius (Acts x.).



natural despondency of his nature,<sup>1</sup> he could not believe. He required the same proof, as they had had ; nay, he must touch the very wound-prints.<sup>2</sup>

**Appearance to the Eleven** (xx. 26-29). A whole week elapsed before the Lord vouchsafed another appearance to His Apostles. Then He appeared again, and this time Thomas was present. Thomas had not doubted, because he wished to doubt, or because he did not love his Master, and, therefore, he had not forsaken the Apostolic fellowship. The doors were fastened, as before, when the Lord again stood amongst them, and saluted them with the well-remembered words, "Peace be unto you." Then He turned to Thomas, and bade him embrace the opportunity of receiving the proof he had demanded.

But the Apostle had no thought now of imposing any conditions of belief. All he could do was to exclaim, "My Lord and my God." Yet he had missed the highest blessing, which is theirs, who having not seen, yet believe.<sup>3</sup>

**The Purpose and Scope of St. John's Gospel** (xx. 30, 31). The incident of St. Thomas originally closed St. John's account of the resurrection. He added the twenty-first chapter afterwards as an appendix. In concluding his Gospel St. John tells us that we are not at all to suppose that it is a complete record of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ, but only a carefully made selection out of an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John xi. 16, xiv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John xx. 20, 25.

<sup>3</sup> This incident of St. Thomas has three points of interest : (1) It affords particular evidence of the reality and identity of the Lord's Risen Body ; (2) It brings out St. Thomas's confession, and (3) it shows that the Lord was present, though unseen, when Thomas expressed his unbelief on Easter Day, and it must, therefore, have been a step in the training of the Apostles in the thought of an unseen, but ever present Lord.



infinite store. The selection had been made with a distinct threefold purpose : (1) that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ of the Old Testament ; (2) That He is the Son of God ; and (3) that believing, we might have life through His Name.

**The Appendix ; Appearance to Seven at the Sea of Tiberias**<sup>1</sup> (xxi.). This forms the fourth and last incident, connected with the resurrection, recorded by St. John. It was probably added by the Apostle for the sake of giving an accurate account of our Lord's words to St. Peter about himself, and to correct the erroneous inference that he was not to die.

The Apostles had not seen Jesus since that second Sunday evening in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile they had returned, after more than two years' interval, to their work as fishermen. They had, however, been led to expect Christ's appearance in Galilee.<sup>3</sup>

In the early dawn of a fruitless night of toil, they were accosted, whilst still in their boats, by a stranger on the shore. There must have been something in his mien and bearing which compelled them to do His bidding, to cast on the right side of the ship. They were rewarded by a great haul of fish. St. John, the beloved disciple, first recognized what had happened as a miracle, and by the miracle Him who had wrought it. He knew it was the Lord.<sup>4</sup> He imparted his conviction to St. Peter, who hastened, in a way very characteristic of him, to join the Lord. To the others, the knowledge that the Stranger was the

<sup>1</sup> St. John's name for the Sea of Galilee.

<sup>2</sup> John xxi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 32 ; Mark xvi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> St. John's intuition now, and at the sepulchre (xx. 8), seems to show that though outwardly less demonstrative than St. Peter, he had deeper spiritual insight.



Lord seems to have come in the injunction to bring of the fish they had caught, an offering no doubt of thankfulness, and to "come and dine."<sup>1</sup>

**The Charge to Peter** (xxi. 15-19). The meal seems to have been partaken of in silence. When it was over, the Lord addressed Himself specially to St. Peter. It was the restoration of the disciple, by his threefold confession of love to his Master, to that Apostleship, which he had forfeited by his threefold denial. To the Lord's question whether Simon (for the great surname is not used) loved Him with that higher kind of appreciative love to which his boastful words at the last Supper seemed to point,<sup>2</sup> the Apostle answered very humbly that the Lord knew that he loved Him, with the natural love of personal affection to which he felt he might at any rate lay claim. Jesus graciously accepted Simon's confession, and bade him feed His lambs. The question and answer were repeated, and the charge given "Tend My Sheep."<sup>3</sup> Again, the question was asked, but this time the Lord did not use the higher word for love, but that one which St. Peter had himself used. Perhaps Jesus made the change, "as though conquered by Peter's importunity." Yet it grieved the disciple, for it seemed, it may be, to him, as if his Master were denying to him, as He might well do after all that had happened, that higher kind of love which, however,

<sup>1</sup> We may note the details which St. John gives, as showing how the whole scene had impressed itself upon his mind; the distance of the boat from the shore, the number of fishes, the unbroken net, the act of Peter, the fire of coals.

<sup>2</sup> John xiii. 37.

<sup>3</sup> The R.V. thus brings out the difference in the two Greek verbs used, in the thrice repeated charge. It is impossible in English to express the difference in the two Greek verbs for "to love." But R.V. carefully notes the difference in the margin.



he dare not any more ascribe to himself. But he could trust himself in the Lord's hands: "He knew all things; He knew that he loved Him." Then with a final charge to "Feed Christ's Sheep," Simon was reinstated into his Apostleship. Jesus added a few words of prophecy as to the death by which St. Peter, in his old age, would glorify God.<sup>1</sup>

**The Word about St. John** (xxi. 20-23). In the most natural manner, St. Peter now wanted to know something of the future of his bosom friend, the disciple whom Jesus loved. The Lord checked the too inquisitive inquiry, but purposely veiled His answer in enigmatical language. It was misunderstood by the brethren to mean that St. John should survive to the Second Advent. The event suggests that Jesus referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, which alone, probably, of all the Apostles, St. John survived to see, and of which Christ so often spoke as a coming of the Son of Man to judgment.<sup>2</sup>

**Concluding Words** (xxi. 24, 25). Whether these last words of authentication were added by St. John himself, or by the Ephesian Elders must remain doubtful. They tell us once more that the Gospel history is only a selection of the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. The Apostle's memory was full of them, but enough was told for the spiritual life of the Church, until the Lord came again.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Peter is believed to have been martyred at Rome, about A.D. 67 or 68.

<sup>2</sup> St. John's purpose in making the record seems to have been merely to show that the words by no means necessarily implied that he should not see death.

<sup>3</sup> That John wrote these two verses himself is suggested by the similar use of the plural in 1 John i. 1, and 3 John 12. That the elders of Ephesus added them (quoting perhaps, in ver. 24, St. John's own words), seems more likely to some, comparing John xix. 35.



In concluding our survey of the four narratives of the Lord's life and work handed down to us from the apostolic age, it may be permitted to us to express the hope that those who have followed us in it may see how true it is that "to know all about Christ is one thing; to know Christ is quite another thing," and that if we would do this latter, it must be by doing His will.

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*NOTES.*

**A. On the Appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection.**

The several appearances may be given thus :—

On the Easter Day :

1. To Mary Magdalene. Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 11-18.
2. To the company of faithful women. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.
3. To the two disciples going to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 13-31; Mark xvi. 12.
4. To St. Peter. Luke xxiv. 34. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 5.
5. To Ten Apostles, and others. Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 36-48; John xx. 19-23.

The next Sunday :

6. To the Eleven. John xx. 26-29.

Later :

7. To Seven, at the Sea of Tiberius. John xxi.
8. To more than five hundred brethren, on a mountain in Galilee. Matt. xxviii. 16-20. Compared with 1 Cor. xv. 6.
9. To St. James, the Lord's brother. 1 Cor. xv. 7.
10. To the Eleven (and perhaps others), ascending to heaven in their sight. Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 4-10. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 7.

After the Ascension :

11. To Stephen. Acts vii. 55.
12. To St. Paul. Acts ix.; 1 Cor. xv. 8.



**B. On the Chronology of the Gospels.**

1. All chronologists are agreed that *Our Lord's Nativity* took place earlier by some four years, than the date assigned to it in our ordinary chronological system.

This is proved by the date of Herod's death, which Josephus connects with an eclipse of the moon, which took place on the 15th of March in the year of Rome 750 or B.C. 4. As Herod died after our Lord's birth, the date of the Nativity is thrown back to the very beginning of B.C. 4, or to the end of B.C. 5.

2. *The date of the Baptism* is stated by St. Luke to have been just as our Lord was completing His thirtieth year, and was therefore early in A.U.C. 780 or A.D. 27.

3. *The duration of the Ministry.* See note at the end of Chapter xl.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS XXXVII.—LI.

### Analysis of St. John's Gospel.

#### I. Introduction :

*The WORD and His revelation of the Father to men.* i. 1-18.

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SECOND visit.* v. 1-47.

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(b) Discourse on the Source of Life. v. 17-47.

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## CHAPTER LII.

### The Acts of the Apostles.

THE AUTHOR—THE DATE—THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

**THE Author.** 1. The Book is anonymous, but it is addressed to Theophilus, and reference is made in the opening verse to a "former treatise" addressed to the same person. That treatise is the third Gospel, which is ascribed to St. Luke in all the ancient manuscripts.

2. The Author was a frequent companion of St. Paul, for he uses the first person plural, on several occasions. He was with the Apostle on the voyage to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

3. St. Luke is mentioned in three of St. Paul's epistles, which were written from Rome, as being with him there. In the latest of these, written shortly before his death, the Apostle says "Only Luke is with me."<sup>2</sup>

4. The Acts of the Apostles was, we may conclude

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 10-13, xx. 5, 6, 13-15, xxi. 1-17, xxvii. 1-8, xxviii. 10-16.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iv. 14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11. The argument for St. Luke's authorship, by a comparison of the Acts with St. Paul's epistles, is very fully and convincingly worked out in Professor Birks' *Horæ Apostolicæ*.



from its closing verses, written at Rome towards the close of St. Paul's first imprisonment, with a notice of the length of which, the Book abruptly closes.<sup>1</sup>

There seems, therefore, no reason to doubt the universal tradition of the early Church that St. Luke, the Author of the Third Gospel, wrote also the Acts of the Apostles.

**The Purpose of the Book.** In his introductory notice, St. Luke tells us that in writing his Gospel, his object was to give an account, in their correct order, of the events of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on earth. The Evangelist resumes in the Acts the narrative at the point where it had been broken off in his Gospel, with the special purpose, it would seem, of explaining to us that though withdrawn from our bodily sight, the Lord still works with His Church, guiding and directing it by His Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

There, behind the veil, invisible to the eye of sense, but ever near and in the midst of His people, is the Lord Himself, beholding all, directing all, overruling all, "from first to last administering the affairs of His Kingdom with an energy of divine power far exceeding anything recorded in the four Gospels." He leads the way, and the Apostles follow, submitting themselves wholly to His guidance, working miracles in His Name, and preaching to all redemption through His blood. And so His disciples increase day by day; for though persecutions abound, the grace and help of Christ much more abound; and the blood of His saints, far from extinguishing the light of the Gospel, causes it to burn only the more brightly.

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's first imprisonment ended, most probably, in A.D. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 1, 2.



That the Apostles did everything under Christ's guidance and by His power, that He worked by them and in them, that He was continually with His Church in its first days, and will be so even to the end, is the great lesson to be borne in mind in studying this Book of the Acts.

The Acts of the Apostles, the fifth and last of the historical books of the New Testament, is an inspired history of the foundation of the Church on the day of Pentecost, and of its progress from that time until the standard of the Cross was planted by St. Paul in Rome, the great capital of the civilized world in the early days of Christianity.

It is most instructive carefully to trace out this gradual progress. The spiritual horizon of the Apostles was evidently, at first, limited to a Church of Israelite believers, into which Gentile converts might be admitted, as of old, by circumcision. The first impulse to wider views came from St. Stephen, who, being full of the Holy Ghost, and as a foreign Jew accustomed to worship the God of his Fathers amidst Gentile surroundings, taught that "the kingdom of God was independent of local limits."<sup>1</sup> Then there followed the work of the deacon Philip, also a Grecian Jew, amongst the Samaritans, showing a real widening of the Church. St. Paul's conversion was still more remarkable, because his commission was to go to the Gentiles.<sup>2</sup> The door of exclusion was, however, first broken down by the act of St. Peter, who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, admitted Cornelius without circumcision into the Christian Church. We may indeed

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii. 48-50. St. Stephen's name implies that he was a "Grecian" (vi. 1), *i.e.* a Greek speaking Jew, living in some Gentile country.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 21.



trace the hand of the Lord in the choice of St. Peter for this work, because of the influence which he wielded amongst his brethren. But soon the Gospel spread still more widely. For Antioch, the noble capital of Syria, became a second cradle of the Christian religion, and the seat of a great Grecian<sup>1</sup> and Gentile Church. From hence, St. Paul started on his missionary journeys, and at last, after many hesitations, and under the distinct impulse of the Spirit, he set foot in Europe, preaching the Gospel in Athens and at Corinth, the centres of heathen refinement and education. Yet his course was to be westward still, until finally, although as a prisoner, he reached Rome, and announced to his fellow-countrymen there that "the salvation of God was sent unto the Gentiles, and that they would hear it."

Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus Christ is seen as working on His Church through the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The book has consequently been called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost, whose nature, work, personality and Godhead are thus made known to us.

The history of the Church amongst the Jews and the ministry of St. Peter are related in the first twelve chapters. The remainder of the book is occupied with the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the missionary work of St. Paul.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles narrates the principal events of the first thirty-three years of the Christian Church, and the wonderful power of the Cross of Christ. Under the quickening influence of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> We must remember that in the Acts of the Apostles, "Grecian" always means "Greek-speaking Jews," as distinguished from "Hebrews," by which are meant the Hebrew, or Aramaic speaking Jews living in Palestine. Gentiles are called not *Grecians*, but "*Greeks*."

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 3, 4, viii. 29, x. 19, xiii. 2, xvi. 7, xx. 28.



Spirit, men of all nations were gathered in, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, bond and free, and were transformed into a holy and loving brotherhood, animated by "one and the self-same Spirit," and resting upon "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all."



## *CHAPTER LIII.*

### **Waiting for the Promise.**

#### **THE ASCENSION—CHOICE OF MATTHIAS.**

### **C**HRIST'S Preparation for Departure

(i. 1-8). St. Luke commences the Book of the Acts with a distinct reference to his former work, the Gospel. In this reference, he says that the last commandments of Jesus to His Apostles were made "through the Holy Ghost." This is very important. For it shows us that not only does the Lord now, since His ascension, work in His Church, through the Holy Ghost, but that He Himself, whilst in the days of humiliation, subject to the conditions of earthly existence, needed the same divine guidance. Hence, as St. Peter says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> Hence the remarkable expression of St. Mark, that Jesus was "driven" of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. Hence, too, the constraining necessity which the Lord felt again and again for Prayer. And for the same reason, the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that it was "through the Eternal Spirit" that Christ "offered Himself without spot to God."<sup>2</sup>

For "forty days"<sup>3</sup> after His Resurrection Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 38. Cf. Matt. iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ix. 14.

<sup>3</sup> It is from this passage alone that we learn the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension.



appeared from time to time to His disciples, and His object in this appears to have been threefold, namely : (1) To give full proof of His Resurrection to His witnesses, the Apostles ; (2) to train them gradually to do without His bodily presence ; (3) to trace the foundations of His Church, and the laws that were to regulate His Kingdom. Accordingly, in His conversations during this period, we find injunctions to preach the Gospel throughout the world,<sup>1</sup> to administer the Sacrament of Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity,<sup>2</sup> and to instruct their converts in all things commanded by the Lord.<sup>3</sup> And for all this, He ordained them, and sent them forth, bestowing upon them, and so upon His Church, the power of absolution and remission of sins.<sup>4</sup>

**The Ascension** (i. 9-12). The last command was given to abide in Jerusalem until they had received "the promise of the Father,"<sup>5</sup> and then on the Mount of Olives, close to Bethany, whither He had led them, the Divine Lord passed within the veil, the Shechinah, or cloud of glory, receiving Him out of their sight.

Whilst the Apostles were still gazing after their Master, two Angels appeared, who, speaking to them, reminded them that "this same Jesus Who was taken up from them into heaven should so come in like manner, as they had seen Him go into heaven." Henceforth, till that return, they were to apply themselves to the work allotted to them of being witnesses unto Him.

And so, in strong contrast with the sorrow with

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 15 ; Luke xxiv. 46-48.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> John xx. 21-23. Cf. Matt. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Luke xxiv. 49.



which they had received the first intimation of their Master's departure, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem "with great joy."<sup>1</sup>

**The Election of Matthias** (i. 13-26). They retired to the already hallowed upper chamber, and either found there, or were there joined by, the rest of the disciples at that time in Jerusalem, some one hundred and twenty in all. Amongst the number were the faithful women, and especially the Virgin Mother herself, who is here mentioned for the last time. The Lord's brethren were also there, for they appear now to have become believers.<sup>2</sup> The whole company were united in prayer, and at the appointed hours of worship resorted to the Temple "praising and blessing God."<sup>3</sup>

In the course of the ten days, which intervened between the Ascension and the fulfilment of the Promise of the Father, on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples, at the instance of Peter, elected one of their number to the office of Apostle in the place of Judas. They had already learnt that the Lord, though absent in the body, was present with them, and to Him therefore they turned for guidance and direction. They recognized that appointment to the Apostolic office was in the hands of the Lord alone. They only prayed that He would now manifest to them the choice, which in

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 6 ; Luke xxiv. 52.

<sup>2</sup> In the list of Apostles given in ver. 13, we must adopt the order "Peter and John and James," and "Judas *the son of James*," as in R.V. Jude or Judas, the author of the Epistle, was in all probability, another person, one of the "Brethren of the Lord," another of whom, "James," was the first Bishop of Jerusalem. Cf. Acts xv. 13, 19 ; Gal. ii. 9. The presence of the women is remarkable, as showing that the Gospel was even already breaking down Jewish prejudice. Cf. Gal. iii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Luke xxiv. 53.



the divine counsels had been already made. It was He, then, who so ordered the lot, that it fell upon Matthias.<sup>1</sup>

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'NOTE.

On Acts i. 16-22.

<sup>1</sup> ver. 16. St. Peter, in this verse, gives emphatic testimony to the inspiration of the Book of Psalms. Cf. Mark xii. 36 ; 2 Peter i. 21. *This Scripture*, or rather, as R.V., *the Scripture* ; meaning Psa. lxix. 25 ; cix. 8. Cf. Psa. xli. 9, applied to Judas by our Lord, John xiii. 18.

ver. 18. *Purchased a field*, i.e. the Jewish authorities bought it with the money received by Judas (Matt. xxvii. 5-10). The statement in this verse as to the death of Judas is not contradictory, but supplementary, to the account in Matt. xxvii. 5.

ver. 19. *Their proper tongue*, i.e. the Aramaic. Vers. 18, 19, are probably a parenthesis of St. Luke's.

ver. 22. We note that already the Apostles had seized upon the Resurrection as the necessary central point of Christian teaching. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Neither Matthias, nor Joseph Barsabas, are again mentioned in the New Testament. The precise manner of taking the lots is doubtful. After the coming of the Holy Ghost there was no need for recourse to such a process. The taking of lots was common in Old Testament times. See Lev. xvi. 8 ; Num. xxvi. 55, 56 ; Josh. vii. 10-18 ; 1 Sam. x. 17-21 ; 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, xxv. 8 ; Luke i. 9. Cf. Prov. xvi. 33, xviii. 18.



## CHAPTER LIV.

### The Founding of the Church.

DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST—ST. PETER'S SERMON  
—HEALING OF THE LAME MAN—ST. PETER  
AND ST. JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN—THE  
FIRST CHRISTIAN HYMN.

#### **T**HE Descent of the Holy Ghost (ii. 1-13).

The Feast of Pentecost<sup>1</sup> was chosen by the Lord for the fulfilment of the Promise of the Father. As the Feast of First Fruits, and the anniversary of the Giving of the Law, the choice of such a day would seem especially appropriate to the minds of the disciples. Once again they would be directed to the accomplishment of their ancient Scriptures, and the fulfilment of types.

The Feast of Pentecost, in the year of our Lord's suffering and exaltation, fell on a Sunday, a Sabbath of weeks from that other Sunday on which Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. The disciples, Apostles and others, were assembled together, perhaps in the hallowed upper chamber, with their hearts full of prayerful expectation. Suddenly the expectation was realized, and the Promise of the Father fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> This was the Greek name of the feast, a word meaning *fifty*. The Hebrew names were *the Feast of Weeks* (seven weeks after Passover), and *the Feast of First Fruits*. Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10, 16. Cf. Numb. xxviii. 26; Lev. xxiii. 17.



With a sound, "as of a rushing, mighty wind," recalling, it may be, the Lord's words to Nicodemus,<sup>1</sup> the Holy Spirit filled the hearts of the assembled believers with a new and unwonted power, and gave a visible token of His presence in cloven tongues as of fire. Thus were the words of the Baptist and our Lord fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

**The Gift of Tongues** (ii. 4-13). The disciples found themselves also possessed of an unprecedented power of speaking, in other languages beside their own.<sup>3</sup> This gift of tongues, St. Paul tells us, was for a sign to unbelievers, to arouse their attention and interest.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it appears to have been a gift much coveted by the early Church, although St. Paul himself, whilst allowing that it was an evidence of communing with God, considered it as inferior to the gift of prophesying, or, as we might say, inspired preaching, which convinced men's hearts, and made manifest their secrets.<sup>5</sup> The gift of tongues appears to have shown itself in brief ejaculations, of a spiritual kind, in languages unknown to the speaker, and which he did not himself always understand.<sup>6</sup>

On the occasion of this first Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit's gifts it is probable that the Apostles and their fellow disciples had the gift of "interpretation" as well as of tongues. But the gift does not appear to have been given for the purposes of their future missionary work. The widely spread knowledge of the Greek language made any such provision superfluous.

Jerusalem was at this time full of strangers, Jews,

<sup>1</sup> "Thou hearest the sound thereof," John iii. 8. The words in the original for "sound" are, however, not the same. See R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iii. 11; Acts i. 5. For wind as a token of God's presence, see Psal. xviii. 10, civ. 3; 1 Kings xix. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Fulfilling Mark xvi. 17.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 5, 24, 25.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 13, 27, 28.



and proselytes, from all parts of the Roman empire.<sup>1</sup> The sound of the disciples using their newly bestowed gift,<sup>2</sup> in perhaps hymns of praise, attracted the attention of these strangers, and soon a crowd was gathered. As they listened, they could hear, each in his own tongue, "the wonderful works of God." The effect, as St. Paul afterwards pointed out,<sup>3</sup> was perplexing. What was the meaning of it all? Some solved the difficulty by suggesting "drunkenness" as the cause.

**St. Peter's Sermon** (ii. 14-36). The Eleven at once stood forward to explain the cause of the excitement. St. Peter acted as their spokesman. He put aside at once the suggestion of intoxication. It was but the third hour of the day, the hour of morning prayer at the Temple, before which no Jew broke his fast. What they were witnessing was, he said, a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, who had spoken of an outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the Messiah, and of a judgment following.<sup>4</sup> From the consequences of that judgment there was a way of escape, for, as the prophet declared, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And who was that Lord? He Whom they had crucified, Jesus of Nazareth, but Whom God had raised up. That this should be, David had prophesied long before. And they, the Apostles of Jesus Christ, were witnesses of its accomplishment, and their once crucified Master had now become both Lord and Christ.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In enumerating the various countries from which the strangers had come, St. Luke follows the order in which they, the Jews of the Dispersion, as they were called, were generally grouped, viz., the Dispersions of Babylon, Syria, and Egypt, with the unclassified Cretes and Arabians.

<sup>2</sup> So R.V. rightly translates. A.V. is wrong.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Joel ii. 28-32.

<sup>5</sup> St. Peter quotes from Psalms xvi. 8-11, cx. 1. In ver. 31 the word



**Effects of the Sermon** (ii. 37-47). The hearts of the multitude were smitten. In answer to their earnest appeal for instruction, the Eleven urged repentance and baptism, and promised the gift of the Holy Ghost. The directions were eagerly embraced. St. Peter's words had struck deep. Three thousand souls were, that day, placed in the state of salvation by baptism, and added to the infant Church.<sup>1</sup>

The picture which St. Luke draws of the loving intercourse which was maintained between the members of the now largely increased band of disciples is very beautiful. They were all "together," that is, not in one place, but forming one society, diligent in their attendance on the teaching of the Apostles, joining in the brotherhood of alms and goods, kneeling together in reception of the Holy Communion, and sending up, as one body, their daily prayers to God. Nor did they neglect the public worship of the Temple. There they resorted continually, at the appointed hours, and for a time, at any rate, were had in favour by the general body of the people.<sup>2</sup>

**Healing of the Lame Man** (iii.). The power of the Lord present with the Apostles was testified by the doing of many signs and wonders. One of these St. Luke selects for narration.

The companionship of Peter and John is a marked

"hell" is put, not for the place of punishment, but for the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, which our Lord calls "Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the fourth Question and Answer in the Church Catechism.

<sup>2</sup> In ver. 42 we should read with margin of R.V. "in fellowship," or better, "in the fellowship." "Breaking bread," in vv. 42, 46, was the first name for the Holy Communion. In ver. 47 we should adopt rendering of R.V., "those that were being saved," by having been placed in the state of salvation by baptism. Cf. "them that are being sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).







St. Peter now probably saw that his words were taking effect, and that his hearers were conscience stricken. His tone changed, and he held out hope and consolation. "I wot," he said, "that through ignorance ye did it." Nay, more, they had but fulfilled what God had shown by the mouth of all His prophets should be done. Then St. Peter exhorted them to repentance, that so their sins might be blotted out, and the second coming of the Lord, of which the prophets had spoken, hastened.<sup>1</sup> In Jesus Christ the great prophecy of Moses was fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> Let them, therefore, as the children of the Prophets, and of the promise to Abraham, embrace the opportunity of repentance and faith now offered them.

**Apprehension of the Apostles** (iv. 1-22). At this point of his discourse, St. Peter was, as is evident, interrupted. The stir and excitement, and the news of the miracle had arrested the attention of the rulers. The Pharisees had been the bitterest foes of our Lord; but the Sadducees, who denied the Resurrection and the Future Life, and who had at the last taken the lead from the Pharisees in procuring the condemnation of the Lord, were now the most determined enemies of the Apostles. To this sect of the Jews belonged at the time the high priest and a majority of the upper classes of Jewish society. With the help of the Levite guard and their captain, whose duty it was to preserve order and decorum in and near the Temple, they hastened to arrest Peter and John, that on the morrow they might be brought before the

<sup>1</sup> R.V. conveys right sense of verse 19. "That so there may come, etc." St. Peter here, and in 2 Peter iii., implies that the second coming of the Lord may be delayed through impenitence, as hastened by repentance.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.



Sanhedrin. But such had already been the effect of St. Peter's address, that about five thousand believers were added to the Church.

The next morning, the two Apostles were brought before a full meeting of the Sanhedrin, of which Annas and Caiaphas were leading members. The question put to them was : "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" St. Peter confessed that he had wrought the miracle by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom they had condemned ; and by this very condemnation he proved from their own sacred writings that Jesus was the Christ : for was it not written, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner?"

The rulers had doubtless hoped to convict the Apostles of a capital offence ; for it was ordained by the law of Moses, that if a prophet or a doer of miracles should arise and seek to draw away the people after other gods, "that prophet shall be put to death."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, then, if Jesus were not God, the Apostles were guilty of this offence ; for they preached Jesus, and boldly confessed to working miracles in His Name.

Still the rulers hesitated. The boldness of the Apostles, the greatness of the miracle, which they could not deny, the excitement of the people (who would probably rescue from any extreme measures the men whose words and deeds had made so deep an impression upon them), convinced the judges that caution was necessary ; so for the present, they merely threatened Peter and John, forbidding them to speak any more in the Name of Jesus.

But Peter, who had trembled at the question of a

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xiii, 1-5.



maid-servant in the high priest's palace, and John, whose courage had failed in the Garden of Gethsemane, now stood erect and dauntless before the assembled Sanhedrin. They and their fellow Apostles had received the Baptism of the Spirit, and by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Himself was present with them, and directed their every action. This, and this only, was the secret of the Apostles' courage, as they made known their determination to declare the truth, to obey God rather than men, and to speak of the things that they had seen and heard.

Being set at liberty, Peter and John returned to their own company, and reported all that had happened to them. Then from the lips of the whole assembly there arose the stately rhythm of the first Christian hymn, as it recounted the fulfilment of David's words in the second Psalm, and prayed that the Lord would still vouchsafe them boldness in speaking the Word, and power to work miracles by the Name of His holy Servant Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

To this prayer the Lord granted an answer at once. The place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

<sup>1</sup> So, rightly, R.V., and in verse 27. The disciples had in mind Isa. xlii. 1, and lii. 13. In verse 29 the word rendered "servants" is different. It means "slaves," or "bond-servants." See R.V., margin. In verse 26, the "kings" would be represented by Herod and Pilate as the deputy of the Roman Emperor; the "rulers" by Annas, Caiaphas, and the chief priests.



## CHAPTER LV.

### Organization of the Church.

JOSEPH BARNABAS—ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA—PERSECUTION—THE SEVEN DEACONS—THE FIRST MARTYR.

**A**LMMSGIVING : Barnabas (iv. 32-37). The one hundred and twenty believers had now become a "multitude," "of one heart and of one soul," the richer ones recognizing by an abundant almsgiving the needs of the poorer brethren, and the whole body looking up to the Apostles as their teachers and guides. The relief of the "poor saints" was in part accomplished by the sale of their lands by those who possessed them.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst those who thus sold their lands, St. Luke selects two for special mention. Of these, the first is Joseph <sup>2</sup> Barnabas. Barnabas was a Levite, one of the Jews of the Dispersion, and a landowner<sup>3</sup> in the

<sup>1</sup> We are not to understand anything like the so-called "Communism" of modern times, but that the urgent needs of all were attended to and satisfied.

<sup>2</sup> So, rightly, R.V. The surname "Barnabas." "Son of Comfort," refers probably to the fulness of the Spirit's gifts with which he was endowed, rather than to any natural gifts of which he may have been the possessor.

<sup>3</sup> The restriction as to Levites holding land (Num. xviii. 20, 24 ; Deut. x. 9, xviii. 2), was relaxed as time went on (Jer. xxxii. 7-9), and seem never to have been applied beyond the limits of Palestine.



island of Cyprus.<sup>1</sup> This man was distinguished for his zeal and piety, and became afterwards famous, as the companion Apostle with St. Paul, on his first missionary journey.<sup>2</sup>

**Ananias and Sapphira** (v. 1-11). The other disciple mentioned by St. Luke is Ananias. His conduct stands out in striking contrast to that of Barnabas. Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, not only sought the applause of men upon false grounds, pretending to a self-sacrifice they could not make, and simulating a devotion they did not feel ; but by their acted lie they thought to deceive the Holy One Who dwelt in the Church, and Whose gifts and influences were so marvellously and abundantly manifested in the sight of all. They lied not unto men but unto God.<sup>3</sup>

**Increase of the Church** (v. 12-16). The punishment which fell upon the guilty husband and wife both cleansed and warned the Church.<sup>4</sup> Upon the outsiders also, a most marked effect was produced. Hypocrites feared to join, whilst, on the other hand, sincere believers were added in even greater numbers than before. The sick, too, were brought into the

<sup>1</sup> The ancient Chittim (Num. xxiv. 24 ; Dan. xi. 30), according to Josephus. Men of Cyprus (and Cyrene) first preached the Gospel to Greeks, or Gentiles, at Antioch, thus widening the doors of the Christian Church. Acts xi. 20, where R. V. adopts the preferable reading "Greeks" for "Grecians," of A. V.

<sup>2</sup> Barnabas had relations in Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12 ; Col. iv. 10). He is supposed (from 1 Cor. ix. 6) to have been unmarried. For his failure on one occasion, see Gal. ii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> We should note carefully how distinctly the Godhead and Personality of the Holy Ghost are proved by verses 3 and 4 of this narrative. In verse 8, in St. Peter's question to Sapphira, it is uncertain whether by "for so much" he referred to the real or pretended amount for which the land had been sold. If the former, Sapphira confessed to a deception ; if the latter, she added falsehood to her fraud.

<sup>4</sup> Here, in verse 11, the disciples are first included under the common title of "the Church."



streets, in the hope that even the shadow of St. Peter, recognized as the leader, might be thrown upon them as he passed along.<sup>1</sup> For the first time also, we hear of conversions outside of Jerusalem. The news had spread, and sick folk from the surrounding district were brought, and all were healed.

**Renewed Persecution** (v. 17-42). Blessing and suffering, however, still went hand in hand. The Sadducees, with the high priest at their head, once more laid hands on the Apostles, and imprisoned them. They were miraculously delivered. The angel who opened their prison doors charged them specially to preach in the Temple, "all the words of this life," that is, of that eternal life, with which their Divine Master had entrusted them,<sup>2</sup> but which the Sadducees denied.

The deliverance of the Apostles seems to have produced, for the first time, a sense of awe or fear in the minds of the Council,<sup>3</sup> which disposed them to listen to the sagacious and moderate advice of Gamaliel.<sup>4</sup> There is, indeed, a trace of remorse in the allusion by the Council "to this man's blood," and the vigorous defence made by St. Peter, with his bold assertion of the Resurrection seems to have won to the Apostle's side the Pharisee section of the Council.

Gamaliel's advice was to let the Apostles alone.

<sup>1</sup> The idea savoured of superstition. Nor does the sacred narrative say that they were healed, unless we are to suppose these sick included in the notice in verse 16, "they were healed every one."

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Acts v. 24. R.V., rightly, "They were much perplexed."

<sup>4</sup> This man was a Pharisee, possessing a profound knowledge of the law. Upon him the title of "Rabban" was first conferred. Under him, St. Paul studied (Acts xxii. 3). He is said to have been President of the Council, and to have died A.D. 52.



Other agitators had arisen, and obtained a momentary influence, and had then passed into obscurity. So would these men, without any effort on the part of the Council, unless indeed their work was God's work. In that case, and he allowed its possibility, it would be useless to oppose them.<sup>1</sup>

The advice prevailed, although, by way of compromise probably between the opposing sections of the Council, the Apostles, before they were released, were subjected to an arbitrary and illegal scourging.

Rejoicing in their suffering for the name of their Master, the Apostles left the council chamber, and continued their instructions day by day in the Temple, preaching "Jesus as the Christ."<sup>2</sup>

**The Seven Deacons** (vi. 1-7). To external troubles now succeeded something of internal dissension. A rivalry and jealousy had long existed between the Hebrews, or Jews of Palestine, and the Grecians, or foreign Jews; and even within the Church this feeling showed itself, and gave rise to the first act of Church organization of which we have any account.

To meet the emergency seven officers<sup>3</sup> were chosen by the whole Church, and ordained by the Apostles. These men all had Greek names, and were probably Grecians or Hellenists. Their principal duty was to administer the charities of the Church, although the fact of their ordination suggests that they were also to engage in higher and more spiritual work. We

<sup>1</sup> Gamaliel instances two agitators—(1) Theudas, of whom nothing further is known, and (2) Judas of Galilee, who is mentioned by Josephus, and is the reputed founder of the sect of the Zealots. He was regarded by his followers as the Messiah.

<sup>2</sup> So, rightly, R.V.

<sup>3</sup> These seven, known in the Acts as "the Seven" are generally regarded as the first "Deacons," although this title is nowhere given to them in the Acts.



find, in fact, two of them, Stephen and Philip, emphatically doing this.

The appointment gave entire satisfaction, and one result seems to have been another remarkable increase to the number of the believers, including, as is most noteworthy, many of the priests.

**Arraignment and Defence of St. Stephen** (vi. 8–vii. 60). The most distinguished of the deacons was Stephen. He is the first person, not an Apostle, to whom the working of miracles is ascribed. His teaching was, evidently, of remarkable power, especially in its far-seeing discernment of the Church's future, when Jerusalem would no longer be the Holy City, nor the Temple the one House of God, nor the Jews alone the chosen people of God.<sup>1</sup> This teaching was so obnoxious to many of the Hellenistic Jews, that they arraigned him before the Sanhedrin, preferring against him the double charge of speaking blasphemous words against (1) The Temple and (2) The Law, that the one should be destroyed, and the other changed.<sup>2</sup>

Stephen founded his defence upon the past doings of the Jewish people ; and, under the veil of narrative, he established three points :—

1. That God vouchsafed His presence and grace to the saints of old in other countries besides

<sup>1</sup> “It was given to St. Stephen to catch the first glimpse of that new land of promise which was reserved for the Church upon earth. The Jews might reject the Messiah, and Jerusalem might become a heap of ruins ; the Church, he foresaw, would survive her rejection by the chosen people and the ruin of the very Temple itself.”—SHIRLEY'S *Apostolic Age*.

<sup>2</sup> St. Stephen's opponents were Hellenistic Jews from Rome (called, Libertines, or freed-men), Africa and Asia Minor. These foreign Jews had their own synagogues in Jerusalem, where there are said to have been 480 of these places of worship.



the Holy Land, and long before the Temple was built.

2. Their fathers had again and again rejected God's messengers. They had rejected Joseph and Moses, and indeed all the prophets.

3. How that Jesus Whom he preached was the Messiah promised by Moses, the Messiah Whose unseen presence was with them in the wilderness. Of Him they had been the betrayers and murderers! "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : *as your fathers did, so do ye!*"

Thus, in a few brief but terrible sentences, did he sum up the whole matter, and condense the history of the privileged but stubborn race from the days of Moses to the hour at which he spoke.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder they were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth ; and when he pointed to the opened heavens and the Son of Man in His glorified humanity, standing on the right hand of God, their rage passed all bounds. Rushing tumultuously upon him, and dragging him through the streets to the place of execution outside the city wall, they stoned this first Christian Martyr, while he was praying for his murderers and calling upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit.

Nor did Stephen's execution satisfy the hostility that his teaching had aroused. Rulers and people and rival sects vied with each other in persecuting all who, like him, were disciples of Jesus Christ.

Hitherto, for some six or seven years from its foundation, the sphere of the Church had been limited

<sup>1</sup> On some points in St. Stephen's speech, see note at the end of the chapter.



to Jerusalem and the immediate neighbourhood. Though its increase had been wonderful, it was still local and Jewish ; whereas Christ meant it to be catholic, the Church of every people and country. Nothing, perhaps, showed His unseen hand, and His personal though invisible guidance, more clearly than the manner in which His great purpose was brought about.

To escape the persecution that followed Stephen's death—the Sauline persecution, as it is sometimes called,—large numbers of disciples, whose headquarters had hitherto been in Jerusalem, now fled from it, some taking refuge in the remoter parts of Judæa, others in Samaria, Phœnicia, or in the island of Cyprus. The consequences of this great movement we shall trace in our next chapter.

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NOTE.

On some points in St. Stephen's Speech.

vii. 2. The appearance of God to Abraham here mentioned is not recorded in Gen. xi. 31. It is, however, implied in Gen. xii. 1, xv. 7 ; Neh. ix. 7.

vii. 6. *Four hundred years.* Round numbers for 430, made up thus : from Abraham's migration to the coming of Jacob into Egypt, 215 years ; and from Jacob's coming to the Exodus, another 215.

vii. 14. *Three score and fifteen souls.* St. Stephen follows the LXX. of Gen. xlv. 27, which gives seventy-five, whilst the Hebrew gives seventy. The number seventy-five, is made up by the addition of the five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh born in Egypt. Cf. 1 Chron. vii. 14–20.

vii. 16. Joseph, not Jacob, was buried at Sychem. Jacob was buried in the cave at Machpelah.

Jacob, and not Abraham, bought ground of Hamor at Sychem. Gen. xxxiii. 19.



These discrepancies show that St. Stephen was either adopting some extant tradition, or speaking from memory. They do not in the least degree invalidate his argument:

vii. 22, 23. The details of these verses are not found in the Old Testament. St. Stephen was no doubt speaking from some received tradition respecting the education and age of Moses.

vii. 25. Moses was conscious, then, of a divine mission before the call at Horeb.

vii. 35. St. Stephen is careful to note the treatment received by Moses. It was typical of that received by Jesus Christ.

vii. 38. *The lively oracles.* Lively, or living, full of life, as coming from God. So "The Oracles of God," Rom. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 11. Cf. 1 Pet. i. 23.

vii. 44-48. St. Stephen, is here rebutting the charge of "blaspheming this holy place," and so goes into some detail respecting the origin of the Temple; showing that not till Solomon had the Tabernacle a settled habitation, and even Solomon, in his dedication prayer confessed that "the heaven of heavens" could not contain God.

vii. 53. *By the disposition of angels.* Better "by the mediation of angels." So Cranmer, 1539. St. Stephen is adopting perhaps a tradition, favoured by Deut. xxxiii. 2, and Psa. lxxviii. 17, that angels were present at the giving of the Law. Cf. Gal. iii. 19.



## CHAPTER LVI.

### Extension of the Church.

THE DISCIPLES SCATTERED—PHILIP IN SAMARIA  
— FIRST CONFIRMATION — PHILIP AND THE  
EUNUCH.

### **P**ERSECUTION and its Effects (viii. 1-4).

In the lives of the patriarchs, in the history of the chosen people, in our Lord's life on earth, and in the records of His Church, we may trace the same mysterious law underlying all, and controlling all, and making it evident to those who desire to understand, that though the people rage, and the kings imagine a vain thing, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, still it is *He* Who reigneth over all, bringing good continually out of the seeming evil, and making the devices of His enemies work together for the furtherance of His designs.

It was so with the Church at Jerusalem. The Apostles, touched with the fire of the Divine Spirit, were mighty both in word and deed. The little flock of timidly following disciples became a great company, to whom multitudes were daily added ; while the presence of the Spirit was manifested in many miraculous gifts, and above all by the fervent love and ardent



piety and holy lives of all who believed the good news of the Gospel.

But wonderful as the progress of the Church had been, it was as yet a local rather than a world-wide institution. It wanted diffusion to become catholic. The Church of Jerusalem must become the Church of all nations ; the Gospel must be preached to every creature ; the seed heaped together in one place must be sown broadcast, and scattered far and wide, even to the ends of the earth.

The first impulse towards this wider spread of the Gospel was given, as we have seen, by the sharp persecution which followed upon the death of St. Stephen. The Lord's prediction of suffering was speedily fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Apostles, the disciples fled for safety to the country districts of Judæa and Samaria, and "they who were scattered abroad went everywhere,<sup>2</sup> preaching the word."

The foremost persecutor in Jerusalem was Saul, who, a member perhaps of the Sanhedrin,<sup>3</sup> and as such occupying an official position, had taken a prominent part in the martyrdom of St. Stephen.<sup>4</sup> Saul, unlike his master Gamaliel, was animated with the bitterest hatred to the disciples. He was "exceedingly mad against them,"<sup>5</sup> "wasting" the Church, and including even women amongst the objects of his fury.

**Philip in Samaria** (viii. 5-25). But the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This included, not Judæa and Samaria only, but Galilee, and the country beyond. See Acts ix. 2, 31, xi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxii. 20. In Acts vii. 58, he is described as "a young man," which need not mean more than that he was under forty. If a member of the Sanhedrin, he must have been at least thirty.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xxvi. 11. Cf. 1 Tim. i. 13; Gal. i. 13.



Philip, one of the Seven, took refuge in Samaria, and became the Evangelist of the Samaritans ; for which office his Hellenistic training not improbably helped to fit him. The Samaritans, like the Jews, were looking and longing for a Messiah ; and in their desire for spiritual enlightenment they had given heed to a man who declared himself to be a visible appearance of the power of God, a personified attribute of the Almighty.

This was Simon Magus, a native of Gittum in Samaria, one of those magicians or professors of occult arts, who ministered to the general longing, existing in the midst of the prevailing materialism, for some kind of revelation, and who almost assumed the rank of religious teachers. Simon, it is likely, sought to attest his pretensions by certain pseudo-miracles ; and, attracted by the real ones performed by Philip in the power of the Spirit, he professed belief in his doctrines and received baptism, probably supposing it would confer some miraculous gift that would be useful and profitable.

When the Apostles, who still tarried at Jerusalem, heard of the work going on in Samaria, they sent two of their number, St. Peter and St. John, to make inquiries, and, if necessary, to endorse doubtless with their authority the act of Philip. They appear, indeed, to have felt that the occasion was an Epoch in the history of the Church, for it was the first step beyond the bounds of their own nation. The Apostles, on their arrival, at once recognized the reality of Philip's work, and after prayer that the new Samaritan converts might receive the Holy Ghost, the great spiritual gift was imparted to them by the laying on of the Apostles' hands.



We have thus the first instance recorded of confirmation by the laying on of hands. We see that it took place after baptism, that its administration was in the hands of the Apostles alone, for though Philip could baptize he was unable to confirm, and that the rite consisted of prayer, followed by the imposition of hands.<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion, the gift was evidenced by some miraculous manifestation, which excited the wonder and cupidity of Simon. He had not received the gift himself, but he now offered money in the hope that he might purchase it. Such an offer showed that the heart of the sorcerer still lurked beneath the outward semblance of the Christian ; and, though Peter's stern rebuke terrified him for a moment, his subsequent life showed that neither first nor last was his repentance real or his faith sincere.<sup>2</sup>

**Philip and the Eunuch** (viii. 26-40). The Church received a still further extension at this time, in the person of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The agent was again Philip. He received a command from God to leave the district, where, as it might have seemed to him, there was plenty of work yet to do, and to seek, by way of Hebron, the desert country lying between Jerusalem and Gaza.<sup>3</sup> He went, and there on the road he met the man after whom God had sent him. The Eunuch<sup>4</sup> was a diligent seeker after truth, he had

<sup>1</sup> Archdeacon Norris. See also an extract from Bishop Wilson at the end of the chapter. Cf. Acts xix. 6 ; Heb. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> From this act of Simon's, the name of "Simony" has been attached to traffic in spiritual things. Simon is said to have become the originator of the Gnostic heresy. In ver. 24 his desire for the prayers of the Apostles betokens no repentance, but simply fear of impending punishment.

<sup>3</sup> One of the oldest cities of the world (Gen. x. 19).

<sup>4</sup> We are probably to understand by the word "Eunuch" here simply



taken his long journey <sup>1</sup> to Jerusalem for the purpose of worship, and now, on his return, he was studying the prophecies of Isaiah.<sup>2</sup> But he was greatly puzzled as to the person of whom the prophet was speaking. A solution of his difficulty was at hand. Philip, acted on by a divine impulse, addressed himself to the Eunuch, and, mounting the chariot at the Ethiopian's invitation, at once explained that the passage referred to, and had been fulfilled in, Jesus Christ. The Eunuch accepted with a full heart Philip's teaching, professed his belief in Jesus Christ, and was at once, at his urgent request, admitted into the Christian Church, by the Sacrament of Baptism.<sup>3</sup> And so the two parted company. Philip was caught away by the Spirit,<sup>4</sup> and continuing his work at Azotus, twenty miles from Gaza, preached the Gospel along the sea-board of the Mediterranean until he reached Cæsarea, the Roman Capital of Judæa.<sup>5</sup> The Eunuch, rejoicing at his newly found treasure of Divine truth, went on his way homewards.

one who held a high office, such as Chamberlain, in the Royal Court. He was not, improbably, a proselyte.

<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia, or Meroë, was the highland country to the south of Egypt. Candace appears to have been an official title, such as Pharaoh, rather than a personal name.

<sup>2</sup> See note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 37 is regarded as an interpolation, and is omitted by R.V.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 2 Kings ii. 16; Ezek. iii. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Where he was living with his daughters, some twenty years later. Acts xxi. 8.



## NOTES.

## A. Bishop Wilson on Acts viii. 14, 17.

"Even in the Apostles' time, Confirmation was necessary as well as Baptism, that persons might become complete members of the Church, and partakers of the grace of Christ : and that these graces were conferred by peculiar hands ; for though Philip had the power of miracles, yet he could not do that which belonged to a higher order,—so great a regard had the Spirit of God to order and discipline."

Again : "Confirmation, in the primitive times, was often attended with external signs. The Holy Spirit descended visibly upon the faithful, that we may know that he descends invisibly now into those who are duly confirmed and prepared for confirmation."—BISHOP WILSON, *Sacra Privata*, Works, vol. v. pp. 80, 81.

## B. On Acts viii. 33.

The Eunuch, as we know, was reading Isa. liii., this verse corresponding to Isa. liii. 8. It presents some difficulties.

(a) *In His humiliation His judgment was taken away.* The Hebrew is, "Through oppression and through a judgment He was taken away," *i.e.* "By an oppressive judgment He was put to death," and so taken by God from His persecutors.

(b) *Who shall declare His generation ?* Four interpretations have been given to these words :—

1. "His life who shall consider ?" *i.e.* "Who will care to bestow a thought on a life so cut short."—*Speaker's Commentary*.

2. "Who shall declare His origin ?" Meaning "His origin is a mystery." So LXX., but wrongly.

3. "Who can count the number of His disciples ?" the Hebrew word being used for a number of people. Cf. *Psa.* xiv. 5, xxii. 30, 31, lxxi. 18, lxxiii. 15 ; *Lev.* xxiii. 21.—HENSTENBERG and others.

4. "As for His generation, who considered that He was cut off ?" *etc.* *i.e.* "Who of the men of His own day gave any thought to the reason why He was cut off ?" Cf. *Jer.* ii. 31.—CHEYNE.



## *CHAPTER LVII.*

### **The Conversion of St. Paul.**

**THE Conversion of St. Paul** (ix. 1-30). The narrative now takes us back to Jerusalem, to the doings of Saul of Tarsus.

In the city of Tarsus, ranking in culture with Athens and Alexandria, the seat of a Greek university, the capital of Cilicia, Roman by conquest, but Greek by settlement and civilization, Saul was born, and here he passed the first years of his life. He might therefore be called a Hellenist ; but both his parents being of pure Jewish extraction, he was, as he ever claimed to be "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." And if a Hebrew, by descent, he was doubly so by education and bent of mind. Hebrew was the language of his home ; and in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, the most famous Rabbi of the times, he had imbibed the intense patriotism that burst forth when Stephen's preaching, and the progress of Christianity, aroused his hatred against the detested sect of the Nazarenes.

It was with these feelings that he became, as we have seen, the chief persecutor of the Christians in Jerusalem ; and, in the expressive words of St. Luke's narrative, he was still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," when,



armed with letters from the high priest,<sup>1</sup> he set out for the city of Damascus, in Syria, probably the most ancient in the world, there to hunt out the followers of Jesus and bring them bound to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

On the fifth or sixth day of their journey they drew near to Damascus. On their left was the towering, snow-crowned Hermon, that "tower of Lebanon which looketh towards Damascus;" far around stretched a dreary plain, skirted by bare hills, in the midst of which the ancient and beautiful city rested on an island of verdure, over which the streams of Lebanon poured their fertilizing and refreshing waters.

Three accounts of Saul's conversion have been preserved to us.<sup>3</sup> From these we may gather the following details. It was mid-day, when a light "above the brightness of the sun" flashed upon the travellers. Some of them fell to the ground in terror, whilst others stood speechless. A voice then spoke from heaven, out of the brightness, which, as it would seem, all heard, but only Saul understood. It was the voice of Jesus, Who appeared visibly to His future Apostle,<sup>4</sup> and addressed him in the Hebrew tongue: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "*Letters from the high priest.*" The high priest and Sanhedrin at Jerusalem were empowered, by decrees from Julius Cæsar and Augustus, to exercise jurisdiction over Jews who had taken up their abode in foreign cities.

<sup>2</sup> Damascus was about 150 miles north-east from Jerusalem. The Jewish population at the time was probably 30,000 or 40,000, with some thirty or forty synagogues. There were three roads from Jerusalem to Damascus. It is uncertain which was taken by St. Paul.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ix., xxii., xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> Acts ix. 17; 1 Cor. ix. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xxvi. 14, R.V. The same words are omitted by R.V. in Acts ix. 5, 6, as an interpolation. The metaphor is that of an ox becoming restive at the plough.



The Lord meant that Saul was finding it hard in his conscience to resist the power of God, ever bearing witness, in the increasing multitude of believers, to His Son Jesus Christ.

In reply to Saul's agitated question, Christ described Himself by His name of humiliation, which Saul had contumed: "I am Jesus of Nazareth"; and then the Lord gave him a commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Saul rose from the earth; humbled, subdued, converted. Blinded by the glory of the light, he was led into the city. After three days of fasting and blindness, he was visited by Ananias, one of the Christians whom he had come to persecute. Ananias had been specially sent by Jesus Christ, and through him Saul was restored to sight and baptized.<sup>1</sup>

After a brief stay in Damascus, during which he preached Jesus<sup>2</sup> with increasing power,<sup>3</sup> Saul retired for two or three years to Arabia,<sup>4</sup> receiving there, without doubt, his training for the ministry, at the hands of the Lord Himself.

Returning to Damascus, he was soon forced to retire, owing to a conspiracy against his life, headed by the Governor of the city.<sup>5</sup> He escaped, so he tells us, "through a window in a basket by the wall,"<sup>6</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> So ver. 20 R.V., rightly.

<sup>3</sup> His exact knowledge of the Old Testament, learnt from Gamaliel, doubtless stood him in good stead now. This is implied by the words "confounded" and "proving," in ver. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. i. 18. Probably one whole year and parts of two others.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 32. The Aretas mentioned in this verse was king of Petra, in Northern Arabia. It is supposed that Damascus had been placed under his sovereignty by the emperor, Caius Caligula, A.D. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Doubtless the window of a house on the city wall. The basket was a kind of "hamper," such as was used after the feeding of the four thousand.



went to Jerusalem. Here, he owed it to the kind offices of his old fellow-student, as we may believe, Barnabas, that he was able to obtain any recognition from the disciples, who were all afraid of him. Even so, it seems probable that all the Apostles held aloof from him with the exception of Peter, and James the Lord's brother.<sup>1</sup>

As at Damascus, so now at Jerusalem, St. Paul "spoke boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus. As a Hellenistic Jew, he appears to have specially argued the matter with "the Grecians."

The effect was the same as ever. They were incensed against him, and sought his life. The Lord also Himself warned him, and gave him his decisive mission to the Gentiles.<sup>2</sup>

Assisted by the disciples, he escaped to Cæsarea, and from thence to Tarsus, his native city. Here for a time we lose sight of him.

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*NOTE.*

**On the Baptism of St. Paul.**

In St. Paul's account of his conversion, given on the Castle Stairs, he tells us that Ananias said to Him, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." The importance of the Sacrament of Baptism is here, as in the case of Cornelius, very strikingly exemplified. If at any time, then certainly in St. Paul's case, the sacrament might have been omitted. But it was not, nor was it in the case of Cornelius afterwards. In both cases, the gift of the Holy Ghost was given before Baptism. But it was the sacrament of admission into the "State of Salvation," and on no account could be dispensed with.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts ix. 26, 27; Gal. i. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 17-21.



## *CHAPTER LVIII.*

### **The Acts of St. Peter.**

THE CHURCH AT REST—ST. PETER AT LYDDA AND  
JOPPA—CORNELIUS—THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH  
—RENEWED PERSECUTION—HEROD AGRIPPA.

#### **ST. PETER in the Vale of Sharon (ix. 31-43).**

The conversion of Saul, and political troubles which occupied the Jews at the time,<sup>1</sup> gave the signal for a cessation of persecution. For a brief period the Church<sup>2</sup> had rest, and the opportunity appears to have been taken by the Apostles to make tours of visitation throughout the Holy Land, for the purpose of "edifying" or "building up" the disciples, and perhaps of taking steps for organizing a settled ministry.

St. Peter took as his district the fruitful plain of Sharon, situated between the hill country of Judæa and the sea,<sup>3</sup> and extending north and south from Joppa to the flanks of Carmel. Coming to Lydda,<sup>4</sup> he healed, in the name of Jesus Christ, the palsied Aeneas. The news spread quickly throughout the district,<sup>5</sup> many believed, and St. Peter was soon sent

<sup>1</sup> The attempt of the Emperor Caligula to place his statue in the Temple.

<sup>2</sup> Not "Churches," as A.V.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Isa. xxxiii. 9, xxxv. 2.

<sup>4</sup> The ancient Lod (1 Chron. viii. 12), famous as a seat of Jewish learning.

<sup>5</sup> R.V. marks the difference between the town and the district by rendering "at Lydda and in Sharon."



for to Joppa,<sup>1</sup> a town on the sea coast, about nine or ten miles from Lydda, to the death-bed of another disciple. This was Tabitha,<sup>2</sup> whose death, on account of her deeds of kindness and love, was greatly lamented. Peter entered the chamber of death, and there, alone with the dead body, knelt and prayed.<sup>3</sup> Then, addressing the body by name, Peter gave his hand to the raised woman, and led her back to her friends. After the miracle, the Apostle still remained at Joppa, where probably there was much to be done, on its crowded quays, and amidst the sea-faring population. He took up his lodgings in the house of a tanner, named Simon.

**Cornelius and St. Peter** (x.). Here it was that St. Peter was prepared for the hardest lesson which he and his fellow Apostles had to learn—the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian Church. The learning of that lesson formed an epoch, the greatest in the history of the early Church.<sup>4</sup>

The Apostles were Christians. But they were also Jews and strict observers of the law. They had, indeed, received Samaritans and Proselytes into the Church, but they would have shrunk back from admitting the uncircumcised, as from an impious and sacrilegious act. But “in Christ Jesus” there was to be “neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision,” and so the unseen Lord, Who had decreed this very thing, made His will known to them by a special revelation.

At Cæsarea there dwelt at this time a Roman

<sup>1</sup> The modern Jaffa. A very ancient town. It was used as the sea-port of Jerusalem as early as Solomon's time (2 Chron. ii. 16). Jonah also took ship at Joppa (i. 3).

<sup>2</sup> “Tabitha” in Aramaic = “Dorcas” in Greek = “Gazelle.”

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Luke viii. 54; and 1 Kings xvii. 19, 23; 2 Kings iv. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Shirley, *Apostolic Age*.



military officer of noble birth named Cornelius.<sup>1</sup> He was a seeker after God, and, though uncircumcised and therefore not a full proselyte, he had studied the Old Testament, and adopted the Jewish hours of prayer.<sup>2</sup> On one memorable afternoon, an angel of God appeared to him in human form ;<sup>3</sup> assured him of his acceptance by God, and bade him send for further instruction to St. Peter, who was then at Joppa, some thirty-six miles distant. Cornelius obeyed the call, and at once sent three of his most trusted attendants to Joppa.

Meanwhile St. Peter was being prepared for his visit to the Roman centurion by a vision on the housetop,<sup>4</sup> in which he saw, as he afterwards came to understand, a representation of the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> The vision taught him that all distinctions of race were for ever abolished between those who believe in Christ and are cleansed by Him.

The messengers of Cornelius had, by this time, arrived, and Peter was bidden to go with them, "doubting nothing, for I have sent them." He, with some of the brethren, started the next day, and on the fourth

<sup>1</sup> A centurion of the Italian band, a cohort levied in Italy, but not the bodyguard of the Roman Procurator ; for at this time the Jews had once more a king of their own—Herod Agrippa, who, having received the tetrarchies of his uncles Antipas and Philip from Caligula, and Judæa from Claudius (A.D. 41), now reigned over all the dominions of his grandfather.

<sup>2</sup> Acts x. 3, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 30. The word "evidently" in ver. 3 means that Cornelius was not in a trance, or ecstasy, as St. Peter was, but awake.

<sup>4</sup> The flat roof of a Syrian house, protected by a parapet (Deut. xxii. 8). There was an outside staircase, giving access to it. Cf. Matt. xxiv. 17 ; Luke v. 19. For the uses made of housetops, see Josh. ii. 6 ; 1 Sam. ix. 25 ; Neh. viii. 16 ; Jer. xix. 13.

<sup>5</sup> The sheet is described in A.V. as "knit at the four corners." But R.V. better conveys probably the correct meaning—"let down by four corners,"



day from the vision of Cornelius arrived in Cæsarea, and were welcomed by the centurion and his friends. The polished sentences of Cornelius are in some contrast with the more rugged and perhaps hesitating words of the Apostle. St. Peter doubtless spoke under the influence of very strong emotion,<sup>1</sup> for he must have felt that the scene in which he was taking, under God's guidance, so prominent a part, was the breaking down at last of that "middle wall of partition," which had been for so long maintained between Jew and Gentile.

In his address to Cornelius and his party, St. Peter reminded them of the message of peace, of which they had all heard, which God had sent by Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> Of all that accompanied the giving of the message, St. Peter and his brethren were witnesses, and especially of His resurrection. They had Christ's commands to bear their witness, and particularly to announce a judgment to come. St. Peter was still speaking when the Holy Ghost fell on his hearers, with the same significant signs as on the disciples at the first. The Apostle was constrained to exclaim, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" It was impossible to refuse the outward sign when God had already given the inward grace.<sup>3</sup>

**St. Peter and the Church** (xi. 1-18). The mystery of which St. Paul speaks as revealed to himself, had now been made known to St. Peter, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs" with the Jews.<sup>4</sup> But the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem heard of the mission to Cornelius with surprise and anxiety.

<sup>1</sup> This is seen in the difficult and laboured construction of vv. 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup> In ver. 36, the "Word" is God's message; in ver. 37 "that word" ("that saying," R.V.) is the report which was abroad of the work of Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John iii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. iii. 3-6.



They were as yet quite as much unprepared as St. Peter had been for the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church. An inquiry was instituted as soon as St. Peter returned to Jerusalem. In his vindication of his conduct, the Apostle gave a summary of all that had happened, appealing, for confirmation of his words, to the six brethren who had accompanied him. His words were full of an unexpressed sympathy with the scruples, so lately shared by himself, of those to whom he was speaking.<sup>1</sup> They carried therefore all the stronger conviction to their hearts. They gave way at once, and that not reluctantly, but with glory to God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

**Further Extension of the Church** (xi. 19-30). St. Luke is evidently paving the way for his account of St. Paul's great missionary work. He has told us of the admission of Cornelius. He goes on to narrate the founding of a second great centre of Christian life and activity.

The importance of this cannot be overrated. The preservation of the unity of His Church was an especial object of the Lord's solicitude.<sup>2</sup> That unity would have been lost had not St. Paul's great work received its justification in the eyes of the Jewish Christians by the sanction and approval solemnly accorded to St. Peter's action in the case of Cornelius, and afterwards extended to the work of the scattered Hellenist Christians at Antioch.

Jerusalem had hitherto been the centre of apostolic working. And though for some years yet it was to preserve its character as the metropolis of the Church, it was soon to yield to Antioch as the home and

<sup>1</sup> See verses 8, 12, 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 20, 21.



centre of the missions of the Church to the Gentile world.

The persecution of Stephen resulted in the breaking down of barriers. Philip had already broken some down in his mission to the Samaritans and his baptism of the Ethiopian. And probably it was whilst the Church at Jerusalem was occupied with the case of Cornelius, that the Hellenist fugitives from Jerusalem reached Antioch. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene are specially mentioned as preachers of the word. They addressed themselves to the Greeks or Gentiles,<sup>1</sup> and soon there arose at Antioch a Church of great importance, composed chiefly of the converts from amongst these Gentiles.

Here again was a matter for apostolic investigation.

Accordingly Barnabas was deputed by the Apostles at Jerusalem to go to Antioch to inquire into the matter. The choice was one of great wisdom, for Barnabas was himself a Hellenist Jew, and not only a man of wide sympathies, as his surname implies, but endowed with great gifts of the Holy Ghost. He recognized at once the great work which had been done, and which he saw was the fruit of "the grace of God." His work, therefore, was to encourage the converts to continue steadfast in the Lord. This done he hastened to Tarsus to seek Saul. With him he returned to Antioch, and for a whole year they continued teaching in the city.

St. Luke adds that it was at Antioch that the disciples first received, from their opponents as is evident, the name of Christians. Bestowed at first in contempt, and yet probably as showing the sense of the heathen world, that the Church was a distinct

<sup>1</sup> In ver. 20 "Greeks" and not "Grecians" is the right reading.



body from the ancient Judaism, the disciples soon came to glory in a name which associated them so closely with the sufferings, the work, and the glory of their Divine Lord.

The history of the founding of the Antioch Church is concluded by a brief notice of the kindly intercourse maintained between this great daughter Church, and the mother Church at Jerusalem. The richer Christians at Antioch sent their alms to the poorer saints at Jerusalem in time of famine. The almoners were Barnabas and Saul, who delivered the contribution to the elders of the Church, who, during, as we may suppose, the absence of the Apostles, were in charge.<sup>1</sup>

**Renewed Persecution at Jerusalem** (xii. 1-19). The narrative now returns to Jerusalem. The persecution which it records probably took place shortly before the visit of Barnabas and Saul. They found apparently no Apostles at Jerusalem. The cruelties of Herod had scattered them. Perhaps they had needed this severe lesson at the hands of their enemies to teach them that they must at last leave Jerusalem, to which they clung, and fulfil their Master's command to go into all the world. So again we see that Herod, representing the powers of the world in striving after their own ends, carried out the divine purposes.

The Herods—father, son and grandson—whose names have come down to us in connection with our Lord and His Church, were all blood-stained tyrants.

<sup>1</sup> In this passage (ver. 30) we have the mention of "elders." Probably the organization of the Church was already more complete at Jerusalem than elsewhere. Afterwards the elders, or presbyters, came to be recognized as a distinct order of the ministry, and to have high and important functions. Cf. Acts xv. 6, 22, 23, xx. 17, xxi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24; James v. 14. On the office of "prophets" (ver. 27) see note at the end of the chapter.



The first was the would-be murderer of the infant Christ and the slayer of the young children of Bethlehem. His son, Herod Antipas, imbrued his hands in the blood of the Baptist ; and now a grandson, Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, who, by the favour of the Roman Emperor, included in his dominions Judæa and Samaria as well as the Tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, became the first royal persecutor of the Church. He had obtained his dominion by the flattery of such rulers as Caligula and Claudius, and his policy was to secure it by making himself popular with the Jewish people. For this end he spared neither gifts nor blandishments, gratifying their love for the outward ceremonies of religion and their fanatical zeal against its supposed enemies. Therefore it was that he killed St. James, the son of Zebedee, with the sword, and threw St. Peter into prison,<sup>1</sup> that when the Passover<sup>2</sup> was over he might further gratify the popular hatred of the Christians by putting that Apostle also to death.

But the fervent<sup>3</sup> prayers of the Church prevailed. St. Peter was delivered by the ministry of an angel. Calling at the house of the mother of his friend and companion, St. Mark, he bade them announce his release to the Church, and then retired to some place not mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Death of Herod<sup>5</sup> (xii. 20-23). Peter's**

<sup>1</sup> St. Peter was kept by four quaternions of soldiers, sixteen in all, four for each watch of the night. In ver. 10 "ward" means "sentries."

<sup>2</sup> So R.V., and well, following Wycliffe and the Rheims version.

<sup>3</sup> Rather than "without ceasing." R.V. has "earnestly."

<sup>4</sup> This passage affords an instance of the Jewish belief in guardian angels. Cf. Tob it. v. 21. Our Lord seems to support it (Matt. xviii. 10). Some have supposed that by "his angel," they meant his disembodied spirit, but this is unlikely. There seems no good reason to doubt that this John Mark of ver. 12 is identical with the Evangelist.

<sup>5</sup> The Agrippa of chapter xxvi. was this man's son.



deliverance was speedily followed by a terrible judgment upon the persecuting king, when at the very height of his pride and arrogance.

In the theatre at Cæsarea, where he was celebrating games in honour of his patron, the Emperor Claudius, he made an oration to the people ; and as the rays of the rising sun lit up his robe of silver tissue with dazzling glory, his heathen flatterers gave a shout, and exclaimed, "He is a god !" He accepted their worship ; and "immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory : and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."<sup>1</sup> In such striking contrast does St. Luke place his death and the deliverance of St. Peter.<sup>2</sup>

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NOTE.

**On the Prophets of the New Testament.**

In apostolic times the gift of prophecy was bestowed upon certain men for the benefit of the Church (see Acts ii. 17, 18, xix. 6, xxi. 8-11 ; Rom. xii. 6 ; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28-29, xiii. 2, 8, xiv. 6, 29-37, etc.). There were then "some hundreds, it may be thousands, of men, as truly inspired as Isaiah or Jeremiah had been, as St. Peter and St. Paul were then, speaking words that were as truly, as any that were ever spoken, inspired words of God, and yet of most of them all record has vanished." The gift was sometimes predictive ; but it included inspired preaching and a disclosing of the secrets of men's hearts, so that they fell down and worshipped God (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25 ; Acts v. 4. See the article "Prophets of the New Testament," by Dean Plumptre, *Good Words*, March, 1865).

<sup>1</sup> Aug. 6, 44. Herod the Great and Herod Antipas are said to have died of the same awful disease.

<sup>2</sup> See Psa. xxxiv. 7, xxxv. 4-8. For the statement of the dependance of Tyre upon Judæa for its corn, in ver. 10, cf. 1 Kings v. 8-11 ; Ezra iii. 7 ; Ezek. xxvii. 17.



## CHAPTER LIX.

### St. Paul's First Missionary Journey.

BARNABAS AND SAUL CALLED TO THE APOSTLESHIP  
—THE APOSTLES IN CYPRUS—AT ANTIOCH IN  
PISIDIA—AT ICONIUM, LYSTRA AND DERBE—  
THE FIRST COUNCIL.

**C**ONSECRATION of Barnabas and Saul  
to the Apostleship (xiii. 1-3). The thirteenth  
chapter of the Acts of the Apostles begins what may  
be viewed as the second part of that book ; and a very  
decided landmark is reached in the history of the  
early Church.

The Mother Church of Jerusalem fades out of  
sight, and the Hellenistic Church of Antioch rises into  
view, as the centre of those apostolic missions to the  
heathen which made it the capital of Gentile Christen-  
dom. The history of the Hebrew Christian Church  
gives place to that of the Gentile Churches founded  
by the Apostle Paul.

A *Gentile* Christian Church, as the Church of An-  
tioch was in the main, free from the trammels of  
Jewish prejudices, and not perplexed with questions  
touching the binding nature of the law and ordinances  
of the Mosaic dispensation, would be much more



likely to originate missions to the outlying heathen world than the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem.

Accordingly it was from Antioch that the first regularly organized mission to the heathen went forth. The work was commenced under the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost. It was at a solemn time of fasting and prayer, that He, speaking probably by one of the prophets<sup>1</sup> then at Antioch, ordered the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul for a special work. That was clearly understood to be the preaching the Gospel to "the Jew first," indeed, "but also to the Gentile." Then, having, by laying on of hands, been ordained and consecrated to the high office of Apostles, to which the Holy Ghost had elected them, the two missionaries sailed from Seleucia<sup>2</sup> to Cyprus, taking with them John Mark, a kinsman of Barnabas, as their minister.

Thus originated the Apostleship of the Gentiles. In the former selection of an Apostle we saw that the one essential qualification was that he should have been an eye-witness of the Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> This condition was fulfilled in Paul—"Am I not an Apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"<sup>4</sup> Probably it was also fulfilled by Barnabas, for he, too, was called an Apostle,<sup>5</sup> having been separated with Paul to the Apostleship.

**Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus** (xiii. 4-12).  
After preaching in the synagogue of the Jews at

<sup>1</sup> The word "as" before "Barnabas" in xiii. 1. should be omitted; so R.V. The five mentioned were probably all the prophets and teachers then at Antioch.

<sup>2</sup> Seleucia "by the Sea" (so called to distinguish it from other cities of the same name) was the seaport and fortress of Antioch, and was distant from it, by land, fifteen miles.

<sup>3</sup> Acts i. 21, 22.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xiv. 4.



Salamis, the eastern port of the island, the Apostles crossed to its capital city, Paphos, on its western side. Here Sergius Paulus, the Roman Proconsul or Governor,<sup>1</sup> a man of candid and inquiring mind, and a seeker after truth, invited them to make known to him the Word of God.

The result was his conversion. Elymas the sorcerer, indeed, withstood Saul, seeking to turn away the Governor from the faith. But the Apostle denounced him as a child of the devil, and, exercising for the first time apparently his miraculous apostolic powers, struck Elymas blind for a season. So swift and sure a judgment convinced the Roman Governor that Saul, known henceforth by his Roman name of Paul, and Barnabas were indeed Apostles of the Most High God. Nor must we fail to note, what is so often observable in the history of God's Church and people, that an apparent hindrance was overruled for good, he who set himself to oppose the truth being made an instrument in advancing it.

Cyprus, however, was not long to be the Apostles' resting-place. They must go forwards ; and, crossing over to the continent, they landed and went up to Perga. Here John Mark,<sup>2</sup> for some unexplained reason, left them and returned to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas pushed on over a high tableland—a wild, inhospitable and mountainous country—to Antioch in Pisidia.

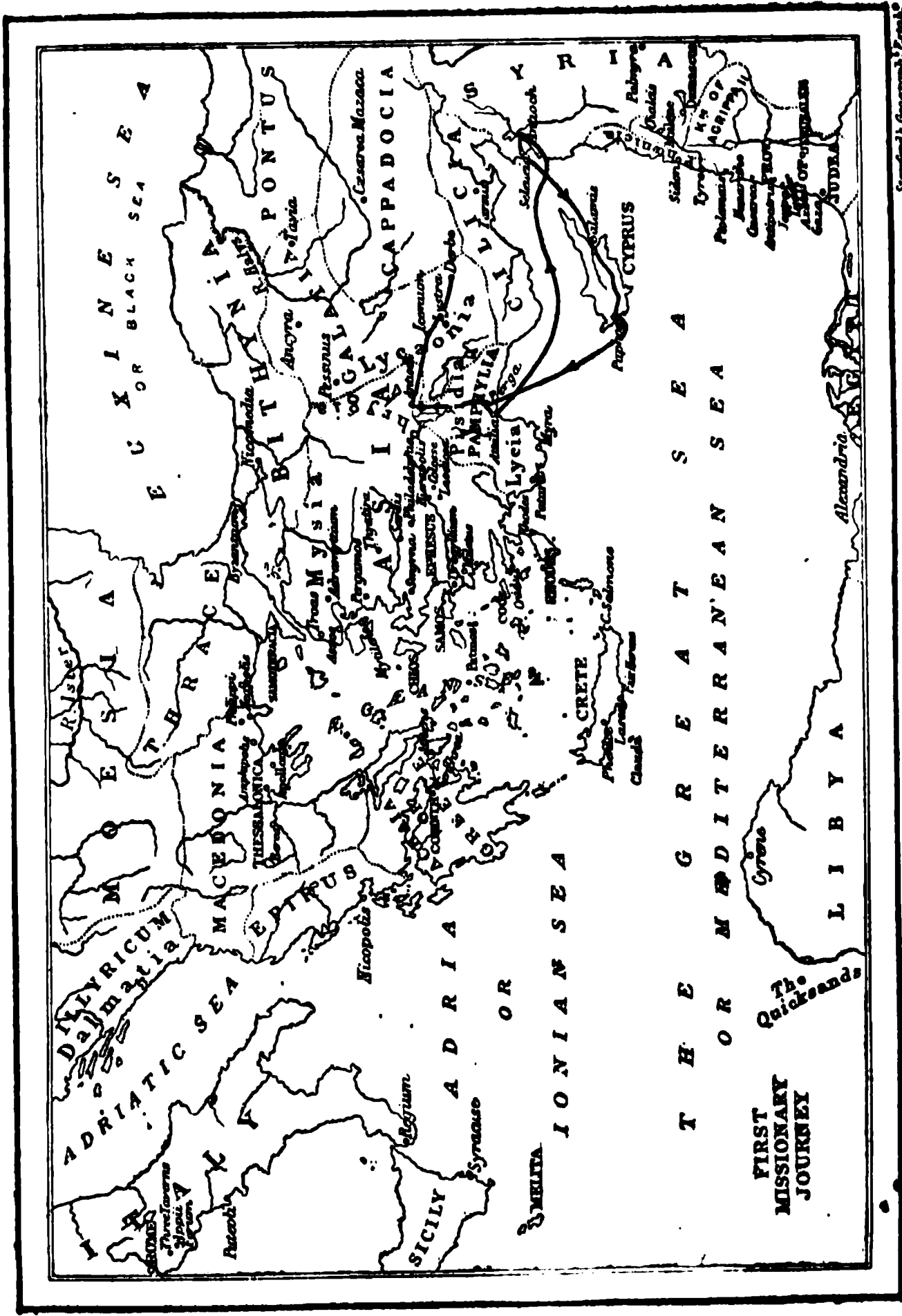
### **The Apostles at Antioch (xiii. 16–52). At**

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he did not like the responsibility of joining in a first mission to the heathen ; or, possibly, he had intended only to see his relations in Cyprus, and had no wish to go further. His conduct, we know, grieved St. Paul very much. But they were afterwards warm friends (Col. iv. 10 ; Phil. 24 ; 2 Tim. iv. 11).



# ST. PAUL'S JOURNEYS





Antioch, in the synagogue of the Jews, Paul preached his first Christian sermon of which we have any account. Comparing it with Stephen's address to the Sanhedrin, we see the deep impression that defence had made upon Paul's mind, although he stifled his convictions, and was only converted to faith in Christ by the revelation of Christ to him.

He told his countrymen that God's purpose in raising up David had been fulfilled in his descendant, Jesus Christ, to Whom the Baptist had pointed, and to Whom their own scriptures bare witness. The rulers of Jerusalem had rejected Him, because they knew not the scriptures ; and yet these very scriptures they fulfilled in condemning Him.

Then, pursuing the same line of argument as St. Peter had already done on the Day of Pentecost, St. Paul went on to speak of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, pointing out how the Psalm, from which he quoted, could not have had its fulfilment in David, but had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul pressed his words home, preaching to them the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, and setting before his countrymen the alternative of death in unforgiven sin, or of deliverance from it.<sup>1</sup>

The sermon made a deep impression upon the congregation, which, as it was dispersing, besought that a second address might be given on the next Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

When that day arrived, the interest was so great that almost the whole city came together to hear the proclamation of a Saviour. The envy, however, of

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 41 is from Hab. i. 5, LXX. For some other points in the sermon, see note B at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> In ver. 42 the words "Jews" and "Gentiles" should be omitted, with R.V.



the Jews was unhappily aroused by the thought of Gentiles sharing with them in the redemption preached by the Apostles, and they began to contradict and blaspheme.

The Apostles were unshaken in their determination to "turn to the Gentiles," and these gladly listened, and many believed.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, however, the Jews succeeded in stirring up so much opposition, that Paul and Barnabas were obliged to leave the city. Shaking "off the dust of their feet against them," they went on, across a chain of rugged hills, to Iconium, which stood in a plain, some seventy or eighty miles south-east from Antioch.

**The Apostles at Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe** (xiv. 1-21). The proceedings at Iconium were but a repetition of what had taken place at Antioch. A great many of both Jews and Gentiles believed; but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, until at length the city was divided into two factions, the one holding with Paul and Barnabas, who are now first called Apostles, the other hostile to them. Their enemies, gaining over the rulers, formed a conspiracy to ill-treat and to stone Paul and Barnabas. They fled<sup>2</sup> to the hill-country of Lycaonia, and preached Christ to the rude and primitive people of Lystra and Derbe.

The Apostles' stay at Lystra was remarkable for one of those violent revulsions of popular feeling that are not uncommon amongst excitable and half-barbarous races. When the people saw the miraculous

<sup>1</sup> In ver. 48 "as many as were ordained," etc., means "as many as were disposed for," *i.e.* "had opened their hearts to the Apostles' teaching." "The reference is to the efficacy of God's grace, not to His eternal purpose."—*Speaker's Commentary*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. x. 23.



cure of the cripple by St. Paul they would fain have worshipped the strangers as gods, who, as they fancied, occasionally visited the earth in human form.<sup>1</sup> But, when the spell of reverence was broken by the Apostles' own words and entreaties, and their disappointed feelings had been worked upon by the machinations of the hostile Jews from Antioch and Iconium, they stoned Paul, and treated as criminals the men whom, but a little while before, they had desired to propitiate with divine honours.<sup>2</sup>

The treatment St. Paul met with at Lystra was naturally impressed very vividly on his memory. We find him referring to it years afterwards,<sup>3</sup> and the bruises left by the stones on his body were probably among the "marks of the Lord Jesus" of which he makes mention to the Galatians.<sup>4</sup>

The cure of the Apostle was miraculous and complete, for he was able to travel the next day. He and his companions retired to Derbe, which some suppose was at this time under a separate government, and therefore, perhaps a place of comparative safety. Here, at Derbe, they made many disciples.

**Return of the Apostles to Antioch in Syria** (xiv. 22-28). From Derbe, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, and, not without risk, visited again,

<sup>1</sup> At Lystra, Jupiter was worshipped. Hence it was naturally supposed that if the strangers were gods, one of them could be none other than he whose temple stood at their city gate; and if so, his companion would be Mercury, who was said often to accompany Jupiter on these mundane visits.

<sup>2</sup> The reference, in ver. 11, to the "speech of Lycaonia," and the at first passive conduct of the two Apostles, clearly show that the "gift of tongues," possessed in such abundant measure by St. Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 18), did not consist in a supernatural knowledge of every provincial *patois*. The people, doubtless, beside their native tongue, understood, like other Asiatics of the time, the Greek language.—DEAN PLUMPTRE.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 25; 2 Tim. iii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. vi. 17.



in turn, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. At each place they "confirmed the souls of the disciples," giving them additional instruction, and, as we may perhaps understand, administering to them, by the imposition of hands, the apostolic rite of confirmation. The Apostles made provision also, by the ordination of presbyters,<sup>1</sup> for the due government of each infant church. They reminded the disciples of the "tribulations" they must expect, and then, with prayer and fasting, they "commended them to the Lord," in full faith that He would care for His own.

Passing through Pisidia and Pamphylia, they made a short halt at Perga for preaching, and then, by way of Attalia, returned to Antioch in Syria. Here they gave an account of their mission to the assembled Church, showing "how God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." They remained at Antioch for some two or three years.

**First Council of the Church** (xv. 1-35).<sup>2</sup> The peace of the Antioch Christians was disturbed, after a while, by a visit from some of the brethren from Judæa. The visit brought about the first Christian Council, which formed another most important landmark in the history of the Church.

The Church of Antioch, as we have seen, originated, under the guidance of the Spirit, the evangelization of the Gentiles, and had become the centre of the Gentile Churches; while the Jewish Church of Jerusalem was the stronghold of "that severe and unbending

<sup>1</sup> The choice of these was made by the Apostles. Cf. R.V. here. The Greek word for "ordained" only occurs here and in 2 Cor. viii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> We may suggest here the following dates: St. Paul's conversion, A.D. 35; first visit to Jerusalem, 37 or 38; second visit (Acts xi. 30), A.D. 44; first missionary tour, 45, 46, 47, 48; stay at Antioch, 47, 48-50, 51; council at Jerusalem, 50 or 51.



Hebraism which seems, as a rule, to have marked the converted Pharisee," and which took alarm at the larger Gospel that obtained at Antioch and in the newly founded Churches of Asia.

With this feeling it was that the Jewish visitors to the Church at Antioch attempted to set aside the authority of Paul and Barnabas, and to teach authoritatively the necessity, even in the case of Gentile Christians, of circumcision and the observance of the ceremonial law of Moses. These Judaizers,<sup>1</sup> as they are called, were met with a firm resistance. But the peace of the Church at Antioch was so greatly disturbed, that it was resolved to submit the question for decision to the mother Church at Jerusalem. Barnabas and Paul, "with certain others," were sent as representatives of the Gentile Christians.

St. Paul tells us, in his Epistle to the Galatians,<sup>2</sup> that his acceptance of this mission was a matter of special revelation. On reaching Jerusalem, his first step was to seek a private interview with three of the Apostles, and to "obtain from them a distinct recognition of his Apostolic character."<sup>3</sup> This they gave him most heartily, and we trace the influence of his words in St. Peter's subsequent speech at the Council.

The Council assembled. St. James, the Lord's brother, as the Bishop appointed to the charge of the Church when the Apostles were scattered from Jerusalem, presided. Paul and Barnabas appeared on behalf of the Gentile Church, while the Judaizing party were represented by "certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed."

St. Peter, in striking agreement with St. Paul, in-

<sup>1</sup> See note C at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. ii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 2-10.



sisted on salvation by Christ alone, and he resisted, with a remarkable appeal to the consciences of the Jewish Christians,<sup>1</sup> the putting such a yoke upon the necks of the Gentile disciples. St. Paul, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, pleaded the cause of Gentile liberty. St. James confirmed their verdict by an appeal to Scripture ;<sup>2</sup> and, finally, the great principle was conceded—the absolute freedom of the Gentile-Christian from Mosaic ordinances and ceremonial law. To give effect to this decision of the whole Church, a circular letter was written in the name of “the Apostles and elders and brethren,”<sup>3</sup> the whole assembled Church, to their Gentile brethren “in Antioch and Syria and Cicilia,” expressing the resolution of the Council, and confirming them in their Christian liberty ; forbidding only such things as would specially give offence to the Jewish Christians.

Thus an authoritative protest of the Church was made against any difference between Jew and Gentile in the Church, and security was taken for perfect freedom of intercourse between the two.

In the proceedings of this first Council it is instructive to observe how clearly the whole theory of Church government appears to be laid down. The standard of reference was the Word of God, whilst the Church exercised her judicial functions, guided, according to Christ’s promise, by the Holy Ghost. “It seemed good,” they said in the letter, “to the Holy Ghost and

<sup>1</sup> In ver. 10—“Nor we were able to bear.”

<sup>2</sup> Amos ix. 11. The quotation was made from memory, of course. Hence St. James’s insertion of the words, “I will return.” Note variation of reading in ver. 18, A.V. and R.V.

<sup>3</sup> R.V. adopts the reading—“The Apostles and the elder brethren.” Verses 12 and 22 imply the presence of the laity, and their concurrence in the decision.



to us.”<sup>1</sup> This letter brought great joy and consolation, not only to the Church in Antioch, but to the Gentile Christians generally ; and the work of teaching and preaching the Word of God was now carried on without hindrance by Paul and Barnabas and Silas and many others.

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### NOTES.

#### A. On the Offices of Proconsul and Proprætor.

The governor of an *imperial province* of the Roman Empire (*i.e.* a province immediately under the Emperor) was called a *proprætor*, or more properly a *legatus*; and under him were procurators or high stewards, governors of subordinate imperial provinces or districts.

The governor of a *senatorial province* (a province ruled by the senate) had the designation of *proconsul*, vaguely rendered *deputy* in the English New Testament, as in the present case (xiii. 7).

The changes that took place in the government of provinces, and the frequent transference of provinces from the senate to the Emperor, and *vice versa*, made it difficult for an historian always to designate these governors with strict accuracy ; but scholars have remarked how correctly St. Luke has observed the distinctions here referred to.

#### B. On St. Paul's Sermon at Antioch in Pisidia.

Acts xiii. 18. The marginal rendering, both of A.V. and R.V., is favoured by Deut. i. 31 ; Num. xi. 11 ; Isa. xlvi. 3, lxiii. 9.

ver. 20. The meaning is that the time from Abraham's sojourn-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18, 19 ; John xx. 23. Cf. also John xv. 26, 27. In the 20th Article of the Church of England the Church's power is defined as partly legislative,—“ She hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and ”—partly judicial—“ she hath authority in controversies of faith,” not to make articles of belief, but to decide what is Apostolic doctrine, “ ruling her decisions by a reference to the Holy Scripture, and to the interpretation put upon it by the Church when as yet Christendom was undivided.”—DEAN GOULBURN.



ing in Egypt to the death of Joshua was about four hundred and fifty years, and that after that there were judges. See R.V.

ver. 21. Here we have our only mention of the length of Saul's reign.

ver. 22. The quotation is from memory. Cf. *Psa.* lxxxix. 20 ; *1 Sam.* xiii. 14 ; *Isa.* xlv. 28.

ver. 34. The "sure mercies" of David are the promises made to David. *Isa.* lv. 3 ; *Psa.* lxxxix. 28, cxxxii. 11 ; *2 Sam.* vii.

ver. 39. In this verse we have the first enunciation of the doctrine of justification, or the being placed in a right relation to God, by faith, of which St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, is the great exponent.

We should notice how entirely St. Paul's outline of the Gospel narrative, in this address, agrees with what the Gospels teach us about Jesus Christ, although the Gospels were not yet written.

### **C. On the term "Judaizers."**

These were Jewish Christians who wished to enforce the Mosaic law universally. They were for a long time a numerous and powerful party, and they laboured unceasingly to destroy the influence of St. Paul, who had so plainly declared, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." They wished to impose the whole law of Moses, and especially circumcision, upon Gentiles as well as Jews ; and could they have had their own way, their bigoted exclusion and superstitious principles would soon have destroyed all true Christianity.



## *CHAPTER LX.*

### **St. Paul's Second Missionary Journey.**

SEPARATION BETWEEN SAUL AND BARNABAS—TIMOTHY—ST. PAUL AT PHILIPPI, THESSALONICA, AND BERÆA — VISIT TO ATHENS — STAY AT CORINTH—RETURN TO ANTIOCH.

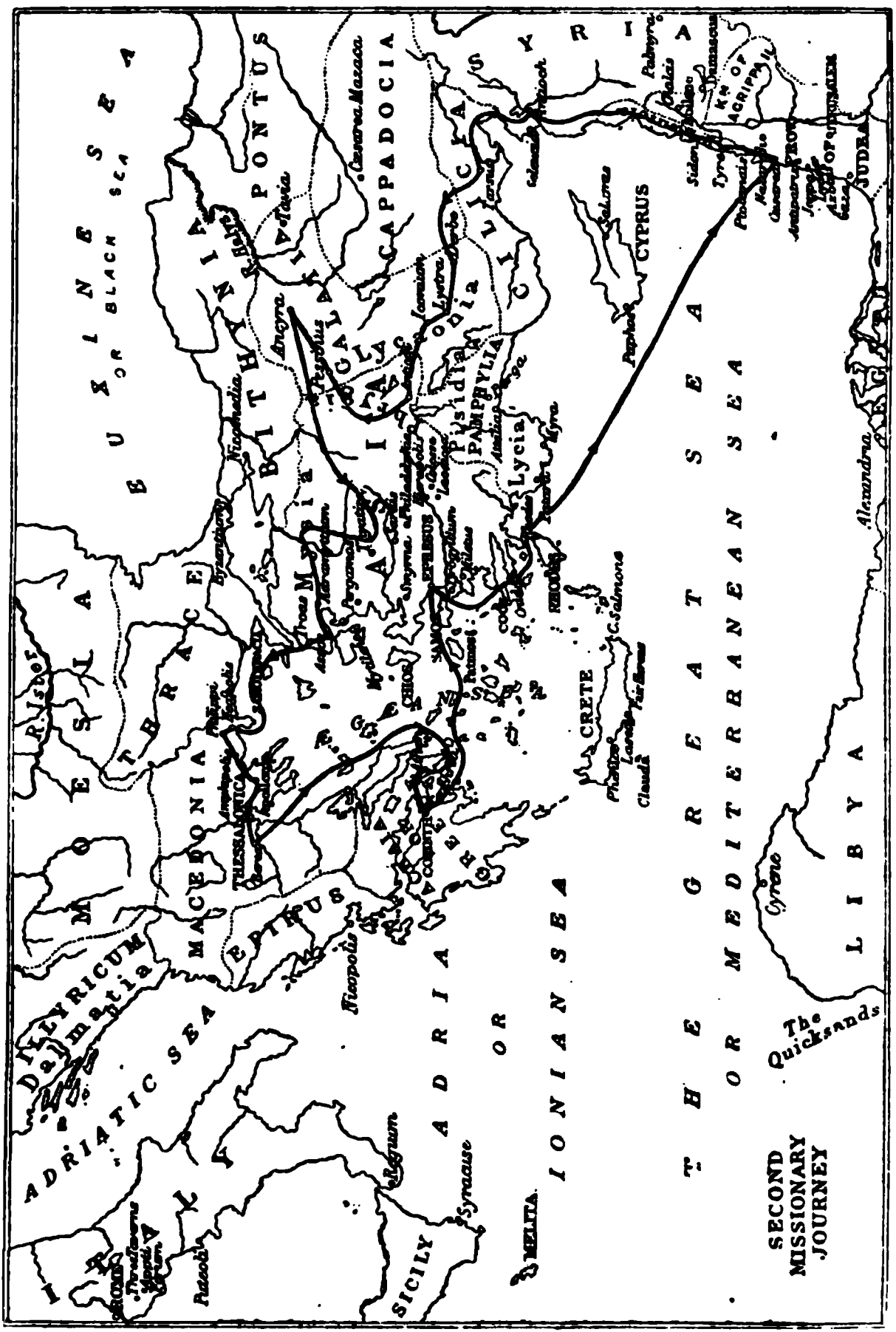
**S**EPARATION between Paul and Barnabas (xv. 36-41). The length of St. Paul's sojourn at Antioch, after his return from the Council, is uncertain. To this time must be assigned that visit of St. Peter to Antioch, to which St. Paul alludes in his Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>1</sup>

After a time, St. Paul resolved to revisit the Churches of Asia Minor, and suggested to Barnabas that they should start upon a second journey, to visit their brethren in every city where they had preached the "Word of God."

This proposal was the occasion of that memorable contention between the two Apostles, which ended in their separation. Barnabas took his kinsman Mark, and went to Cyprus. St. Paul chose Silas, and set out, followed by the prayers of the brethren at Antioch, on his second great missionary tour.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 11-13.





SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



The temporary estrangement<sup>1</sup> between the two Apostles, unpropitious as it seemed, was probably overruled by the Lord for good. St. Paul was now starting on a great venture—how great he did not himself yet know. For this Barnabas might have lacked nerve, for he was not wholly emancipated from his Jewish prejudices, and seems to have been wanting in moral courage.<sup>2</sup>

**The Journey to Troas** (xvi. 1–8). Reversing the order of his last tour, Paul and his companion Silas passed first through Cicilia, and then pushed on through the passes of Mount Taurus to the tableland on which Derbe and Lystra stood. At Lystra Paul, acting under special divine guidance,<sup>3</sup> enlisted in Christ's service the youthful Timothy; and, that he might not be rejected by the Jews, circumcised him, thus carrying out his maxim, that "in things indifferent, expediency is the highest principle."<sup>4</sup> Timothy's parentage was mixed, his father being a Gentile, and probably an unbeliever, and his mother a Jewess, a woman of remarkable piety, who had diligently trained her son.<sup>5</sup>

Timothy accompanied St. Paul and Silas, as they continued their journey through the Phrygian and Galatian country,<sup>6</sup> delivering to the Churches the decrees of the

<sup>1</sup> By a reference to 1 Cor. ix. 6, Col. iv. 10, and Philem. 24, we shall see that the estrangement between St. Paul and St. Barnabas and St. Mark was not lasting; for we find St. Paul, six years afterwards, holding up St. Barnabas to the Corinthians as an example, and eleven years afterwards St. Mark ministered to St. Paul during his imprisonment at Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. ii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 18, iv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 20. Cf. Acts xxi. 25, 26. The case of Titus, as altogether a Gentile, was different. Cf. Gal. ii. 3; v. 2.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 14, 15.

<sup>6</sup> The ancient Phrygia had been invaded in the third century B.C. by Gauls, occupied by them, and called indifferently, Phrygia, or Galatia. It was formed into a Roman province about a century later.



Council of Jerusalem, and establishing them in the faith. In Galatia, St. Paul appears to have been attacked by illness, which, detaining him there for a while, enabled him and his fellow-labourers to instruct the ignorant and fickle Galatians more fully.<sup>1</sup> The provinces of Bithynia northwards, and of Asia westwards, seemed to be calling for the Gospel. But the Holy Ghost forbade delay,<sup>2</sup> and led them on, through Mysia, to the City of Troas, on the shore of the Ægean Sea.

**Entry into Europe** (xvi. 9–12). At Troas, they were not long left in doubt as to their future course. A vision beckoned them on to Europe. St. Paul and his party, strengthened now by the addition of St. Luke,<sup>3</sup> who perhaps, as a physician,<sup>4</sup> was a special help and comfort to the Apostle in his weak state of health, immediately took ship, and after a quick passage<sup>5</sup> of less than two days landed at Neapolis in Thrace.

Thence, over the great “Egnatian way,” the high road of Roman troops and merchandise, they went on ten or twelve miles to Philippi in Macedonia, then a Roman colony,<sup>6</sup> and famous as the scene of the great victory of Octavius Cæsar over Brutus and Cassius

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking perhaps through Silas, who was a prophet (Acts xv. 32 ; cf. Acts xx. 23 ; 2 Cor. xii. 1).

<sup>3</sup> The first person is assumed in Acts xvi. 10, showing that St. Luke had joined the little band of missionaries.

<sup>4</sup> Col. iv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Acts xx. 6.

<sup>6</sup> “A Roman colony was a miniature Rome, governed by Roman laws, with the Roman language spoken, and Roman coin in circulation. Roman colonies were planted for the defence of the frontiers of the empire, and for keeping provincials in order.”—*Speaker's Commentary*.

In ver. 12, by “the chief city,” we are probably to understand “the first city” in Macedonia to which St. Paul came. Cf. R.V. here.



(B.C. 42), which swept away the Roman republic, and established the Empire, whose highways were to become the highways of the Cross.

**At Philippi** (xvi. 15-40). St. Paul began his mission, as usual, by preaching to the Jews. At Philippi, they appear to have been too few in number to have a regular synagogue; and so they met in an oratory by the river side for their accustomed worship.

At Philippi was a woman named Lydia, from the Macedonian colony of Thyatira, in Asia Minor, a person, as we may gather from her trade, of wealth and substance, and one who, as a proselyte, had adopted the Jewish faith and worship. "The Lord opened her heart," so that she embraced the faith of Christ, and with all her household was baptized. In gratitude for the spiritual benefits she had received, she ministered to the missionaries of her "worldly things."

The healing by St. Paul of a poor possessed slave girl, one of a class not uncommon in Thrace, put a sudden stop to his preaching. Her owners, finding their hopes of gain gone, raised a persecution, the first by heathens, against St. Paul and his friends, which resulted in the scourging of Paul and Silas by order of the magistrates,<sup>1</sup> and their being cast into prison. They resorted to prayer, which was answered by their miraculous deliverance, and the conversion of the Roman jailor.

Whether any report of what had happened had reached the authorities we are not told, but an order for the release of Paul and Silas came in the morning, of which they refused to avail themselves. They

<sup>1</sup> The Duumvirs, or Prætors, of a Roman colony, who were attended by Lictors (the serjeants of vv. 35, 38).



claimed the privileges of Roman citizenship,<sup>1</sup> as much probably for the sake of their converts as for their own. To have left the city under an imputation of guilt, however undeserved, would have been a hindrance to their work. Their claim had the desired effect. The magistrates, alarmed at the possible consequences of their own illegal act, came themselves to the prison, and requested Paul and Silas to leave the city.

In no haste to comply with the magistrates' request, they retired to the house of Lydia, and comforted the disciples. Then, leaving apparently St. Luke and Timothy at Philippi, they passed on through Macedonia to Thessalonica, the capital and the residence of the Roman Governor.

**At Thessalonica** (xvii. 1-9). Here, in the synagogue of the Jews, St. Paul showed from the Old Testament Scriptures how the Messiah was to suffer and rise again from the dead, and that all these prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus. For three Sabbath days<sup>2</sup> the Apostle continued his addresses to his fellow-countrymen, and some of them believed. He then appears to have turned to the Gentiles, and preached to them of "another king." He met with eager listeners, so that "a great multitude" of the Gentiles, proselytes and others probably, as well as a considerable number of "the chief women" embraced the

<sup>1</sup> Silas therefore was a Roman citizen, as well as St. Paul. His Latin name, Silvanus (contracted into Silas) would suggest this.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 Thess. ii. 9, St. Paul implies that he had worked at his trade at Thessalonica. He stayed there long enough to organize the Church (1 Thess. v. 12), and whilst he was there the Philippians sent "once and again" to him (Phil. iv. 16). These points indicate a longer stay than the three weeks of Acts xvii. 2, and suggest the explanation adopted above.



faith. The Church thus founded became widely known for its piety and earnestness.<sup>1</sup>

But the old jealousy of the unbelieving Jews re-appeared at Thessalonica, and speedily produced the same fruits it had so often borne before. Gathering a crowd of market-place roughs,<sup>2</sup> they attacked the house of Jason, with whom Paul and Silas had lodged,<sup>3</sup> and, failing to find them, seized upon their host, and dragging him before "the rulers of the city,"<sup>4</sup> maliciously misrepresented to them the words of St. Paul. The rulers appear to have insisted upon Jason turning Paul and Silas out of his house.<sup>5</sup> They accordingly left the city the same night, and went on to Berea, some sixty miles further west.

**At Berea** (xvii. 10-15). At this place the missionaries received a welcome from their own countrymen, to which they were little accustomed. The Word was received with all readiness, the Old Testament Scriptures were searched in proof of St. Paul's words, and many believed, both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>6</sup> But the Thessalonian Jews, hearing of the good work being done at Berea, came thither, and compelled St. Paul to leave. Under a strong escort of disciples he left by sea for Athens, and arrived there safely. Meanwhile, Silas and Timothy remained for a time at Berea.

**At Athens** (xvii. 16-34). Greece, or Achaia, as

<sup>1</sup> Thess. i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the meaning of "lewd fellows of the baser sort." Cf. R.V.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the same as in Rom. xvi. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Here called "Politarchs," a name not found in any other writer; but on a marble arch, recently at Thessalonica and now in the British Museum. St. Luke's careful accuracy is thus shown.

<sup>5</sup> As Paul and Silas left the same night, verse 9 can hardly mean that they took bail of Jason and the other converts.

<sup>6</sup> The name of one convert is preserved, Sopater (Acts xx. 4).



it was then called, though at that time only a province of the Roman Empire, was still the mistress of Rome in learning, literature, philosophy, and art. Roman youths finished their education at Athens, its capital. Athens was, too, the head-quarters of religion ; but a religion that was simply a deification of the powers of nature, and had no connection with morality. It was the very perfection of idolatry. The uncouth idols of Eastern, or semi-barbarous countries, here gave place to forms of beauty, which we still admire, but vainly attempt to imitate. At every step the stranger came upon images of gods and' goddesses graven with surprising skill ; amongst which the statue of Minerva the masterpiece of Phidias and the triumph of Greek art, especially invited admiration.

Athens also was the centre of the two chief sects of the philosophers of Greece, the Epicureans and the Stoics, whose principles, however different, were almost equally opposed to the sublime teachings of Christianity.

The Epicureans, deriving their name from their founder, Epicurus, were the practical Atheists of the day. They denied God's government of the world, and the immortality of the soul. "Chance" was their God ; and the gratification of self, and the pursuit of pleasure, were their chief objects. To them the maxim might be applied, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The Stoics, who had their name from the Stoa,<sup>1</sup> or arcade, in which their founder, Zeno, used to teach, held a doctrine of fatalism, and the necessity of self-denial. Some of the best men of ancient times be-

<sup>1</sup> Called the "Stoa pochilè," adorned with frescoes of the battle of Marathon.



longed to this school of philosophy, which exhibited, "in some of its ethical language, an apparent approximation to Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

With these men St. Paul was now brought into contact. His spirit was deeply stirred as he saw the city full of idols, and its population given up to pleasure, and ignorant of the true God. Beside holding arguments with the Jews in their synagogue, he frequented the Agora, or market-place, seeking to make his message known. The philosophers were disposed to laugh at his teaching—to them novel and impossible.<sup>2</sup> For the sake probably of greater quiet and freedom, they led him, courteously as it would seem,<sup>3</sup> to Areopagus, "a low hill raised above the bustle of the Agora," and requested some further explanation of his doctrines.<sup>4</sup>

St. Paul needed all the tact and eloquence of which he was so great a master. He was about to address, not a rude Lycaonian tribe, but an audience of which the world could not show the like. To these subtle, critical, proudly intellectual, sarcastic, and self-satisfied Athenians he had to set forth, as the one Saviour and Judge, a Man Who had been crucified as a malefactor, and to testify how God had raised Him from the dead, and given to Him all power in Heaven and on earth.

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the later Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius were remarkable instances of this near approach in principle to Christianity.

<sup>2</sup> Even those of them who accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul would not believe in the resurrection of the body.

<sup>3</sup> The same word occurs in a gentle sense in Acts ix. 27, xxiii. 19; Matt. xiv. 31; Mark viii. 23; and in a rougher sense, Acts xvi. 19, xviii. 17, xxi. 30.

<sup>4</sup> The oldest tribunal of Athens, the "Court of Areopagus," held its sittings on this hill. Perhaps it was sitting at the time, and the Apostle brought before it in a sort of informal way. If so, ver. 32 would imply that the case was dismissed. The word "Areopagus" means "The Hill of Mars."



And so we may mark, that though, in some cities in which an important work was done, no speech of St. Paul is placed on record, yet here at Athens, where scarcely any impression was made, a full summary of his address is given to us. This, doubtless, is because of its important bearing on the religion, philosophy, and civilization of the heathen world, in connection with the Gospel of Christ. The speech was characterized by a judgment, a power, and an eloquence that to this day command our admiration. His first words were courteous and commendatory ; and such as would at once excite both interest and attention. He bore witness to the Athenians being "scrupulously religious,"<sup>1</sup> in the sense in which they understood religion, as the honour they paid to the gods and their anxiety to omit none testified. Even the Unknown God had His altar. This, of itself, showed their dissatisfaction with the polytheism all around them. They were yearning after something better ; and this, St. Paul declared, it was his task to make known to them. He exposed the worthlessness of the gross polytheism and creature-worship he saw around him ; he reprovèd the proud exclusiveness which regarded all other races as barbarous, reminding them of the words of their own poet, Aratus ;<sup>2</sup> and he told them of God's call to repentance, of the judgment to come, of the Judge whom God had appointed, and whom (in proof thereof) He had raised from the dead.

Here St. Paul seems to have been cut short by a derisive shout from his audience. Some mocked,

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's intention was to conciliate : hence he used a phrase which would be regarded as complimentary. Neither A.V. nor R.V. render very successfully.

<sup>2</sup> A native of Cilicia, who lived about 250 B.C.



while others said more courteously, "We will hear thee again of this matter."

Nevertheless, the Apostle's words did not wholly fall to the ground ; for, though the preaching of the Cross by Paul was to the Greeks, as a people, "foolishness," yet some among them "clave to him." One of these was Dionysius, a judge of the Court of Areopagus ; so that to a few even of the Athenians Christ became as "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

**At Corinth** (xviii. 1-18). Nowhere does St. Paul's teaching appear to have met with so little success as at Athens. This was not due to persecution, but to indifference. So not long after the speech on Areopagus the Apostle left Athens,<sup>1</sup> and went to Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the residence of the Proconsul. Corinth was a great commercial city, having trade with the chief cities of the world, east and west. It offered, in consequence, special advantages as a centre of Christian teaching, and St. Paul, therefore, made a prolonged stay of eighteen months there, encouraged by the Lord Himself, who assured him that He "had much people in that city."

The Apostle began his work, as elsewhere, by reasoning with the Jews in their synagogue every Sabbath ; while, on week-days, he wrought diligently at his trade of tent-making, lodging with a Christian Jew of Pontus, named Aquila, who, with his wife Priscilla, had been expelled from Rome by a decree of the Emperor Claudius.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Never again, apparently, to revisit it. It is only once mentioned in St. Paul's epistles (1 Thess. iii. 1).

<sup>2</sup> The reason of the decree is uncertain. It did not remain long in force. See Rom. xvi. 3 ; and in Acts xxviii. 17 we find many Jews at Rome.



The arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia and the favourable report of which they were the bearers, cheered the Apostle greatly.<sup>1</sup> Their coming, too, relieved him of any immediate necessity of labouring for his own support, and he was thus able to enter more fully than ever into his mission work.<sup>2</sup> This increased activity drew down upon St. Paul the vigorous opposition of the unbelievers, and resulted in his wholly withdrawing from their synagogue. Very solemnly "he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your heads ; I am clean ; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." The Apostle received a welcome from Justus, whose house became the place of worship for the converts. Amongst these were Crispus, the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue,<sup>3</sup> and a number of persons from the lower and middle classes of the Corinthians.<sup>4</sup>

The step which was thus taken of separation from the Jewish synagogue was one of very grave importance, and undoubtedly caused St. Paul no little anxiety. From this he was relieved by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The return of Silas and Timotheus had another result. It called forth the earliest of the Epistles of St. Paul which have been preserved to us. This is

<sup>1</sup> From 1 Thess. iii. 2, it appears that Timothy, at any rate, had rejoined the Apostle at Athens, and had been again sent on a mission of inquiry to Thessalonica. Silas then, probably, joined Timothy, and they both returned to St. Paul, then at Corinth. Cf. 1 Thess. iii. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> This man's conversion was apparently regarded as of great importance, for St. Paul baptized him with his own hands. 1 Cor. i. 15. In the case of the family of Crispus, we have the first recorded instance of the conversion of a whole *Jewish* household.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

<sup>5</sup> He received more than one such whilst at Corinth. See 1 Thess. iv. 15 ; 2 Thess. ii. 1.



THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS. Its objects were to express the Apostle's love for his converts, to encourage them under persecution, and to correct certain errors into which they had fallen respecting the second coming of the Lord. It is also incidentally, perhaps, the keen and painful impression which the persecution of the Jews had made upon St. Paul's mind.

After an interval of perhaps a year, the Jews made a fresh and a more determined attack upon St. Paul, employing now rather the Epicurest, Gallio, who was the attorney of Seneca, the celebrated philosopher. The different ways in which the Jews expressed the anger of Gallio—a man we are told of an amiable disposition—show he refused to entertain their applications against the Apostle.

**Passage to Antioch** (viii. 1-12). The year and a half's sojourn in Corinth came to an end, and St. Paul, having in some degree unknown to us made a vow, determined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to keep the coming feast of Pentecost,\* and to sacrifice his vow by the accustomed sacrifice, which must now be offered in the Temple.

In company with Aquila and Priscilla, the Apostle

\* There is much

about this. There is much. The date of this Epistle is A.D. 51. The second Epistle was also written from Corinth, about a year later, to correct some further misapprehensions of the Thessalonians (2 Thess. i. 1-12).

\* Galile was right here. But he ought to have restrained the crowd in their attack upon Sadducees.

\* The feast is not mentioned, but Pentecost seems to be the most likely one. It could not have crossed the sea in time for the Passover.

The vow may have been occasioned by deliverance from some imminent danger, or severe sickness. The incident shows how the Jewish Christians, even St. Paul, retained their national customs.



sailed from Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, for Ephesus, where he stayed over one Sabbath. Not suffering himself to be further detained, and leaving his companions behind him, he continued his voyage to Syria, and landed at Cæsarea. A brief visit to Jerusalem enabled him to fulfil his vow, and to "salute the Church." He then returned to Antioch, and thus brought to an end, about June, A.D. 54, his second great missionary journey, during which many new Churches had been founded, and the Gospel preached in several of the cities of Europe, the continent where, for many centuries, it was to have its chief centre and home.



## CHAPTER LXI.

### St. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

#### **JOURNEY to Ephesus** (xviii. 23, xix. 1).

After a stay of "some time" at Antioch, St. Paul, with his characteristic energy, commenced his third great apostolic tour. He was accompanied, probably, by Timothy and Erastus,<sup>1</sup> and Gaius and Aristarchus,<sup>2</sup> and perhaps also by Titus.<sup>3</sup> The Apostle made a regular visitation of the Churches he had founded on his previous journeys, in Galatia and Phrygia, and gave directions for a systematic collection of alms on behalf of the poor Jerusalem Christians.<sup>4</sup> Passing on, through the upper country, St. Paul and his companions reached Ephesus. This city was the capital of the Roman province, called Asia in the New Testament, the residence of the Proconsul, and a great centre of commerce. It was also noted as the seat of Eastern philosophy, as well as for the knowledge of magical arts possessed by its inhabitants. The city was adorned with one of the most magnificent heathen temples of those times, dedicated to the Grecian goddess Artemis,<sup>5</sup> and enshrining, not the statue of a beautiful huntress such

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix. 22. Cf. 2 Cor. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 29.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Cf. Gal. ii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Called by the Romans, "Diana."







as the Greeks would have placed there, but a rough hewn and grotesque image of a female, representing the prolific powers of nature. The importance of Ephesus determined St. Paul to make a long stay there. This stay, with occasional visits to neighbouring towns, extended over three years.

**Apollos** (xviii. 24-28). St. Luke interrupts his narrative to give us a brief notice of a remarkable Alexandrian Jew, Apollos by name, a disciple of John the Baptist, exceedingly well read in the ancient Scriptures, learned and eloquent. After St. Paul left Ephesus on his return from his second great journey, Apollos came to that city, and fell in with Aquila and Priscilla. Like others of the Baptist's disciples, he had accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah, but knew as yet nothing of His resurrection and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Upon these points Aquila and his wife gave him instruction,<sup>1</sup> and when he wished to go to Greece, they gave him letters of introduction to the Christians there, which ensured him a favourable reception, and enabled him to carry on a great work for the Lord in those parts.<sup>2</sup>

**St. Paul at Ephesus** (xix.). It was during the absence of Apollos at Corinth, that St. Paul reached Ephesus. There he fell in with certain disciples, who, having been baptized "into John's baptism," needed, as Apollos had done, further instruction. This St. Paul gave them, and then, after their baptism into the name, the faith that is and religion, of Jesus Christ, he confirmed them by the laying on of hands.

<sup>1</sup> Such is the meaning of verses 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Apollos was evidently highly thought of by St. Paul. Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 22; Titus iii. 13.

St. Luke's account of him helps us to understand the allusions to him in the first Epistle to Corinthians, which was written from Ephesus.



The confirmation was followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, as in the case of the Samaritans.<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle now completed his promise of returning to Ephesus,<sup>2</sup> by resorting to the Jewish synagogue. For three months he spake boldly to them about that heavenly kingdom of Christ upon earth, into which he so earnestly invited them in the Name of his Divine Master. But when they hardened their hearts, and spake evil of the new way of faith and obedience, he withdrew from their synagogue ; and, forming as he had done at Corinth, a separate Christian congregation, worshipped with them in the lecture-room of a disciple named Tyrannus. For more than two years longer St. Paul continued at Ephesus, building up the Church, and spreading the knowledge of the Lord Jesus throughout the entire province.<sup>3</sup>

Ephesus, as we have seen, was famous as the city of magic and of false miracles. For this reason, as it would seem, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul," so that, as in the case of Moses and the magicians of Egypt, and in that of Daniel and the Chaldæan astrologers, His power and truth might be made known.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the unbelieving Jews, who practised exorcism, like so many of their countrymen,<sup>5</sup> attempted, in imitation of St. Paul, to use the name

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> The "three years" of Acts xx. 31 is probably a round number ; to make it up we have the "three months" of xix. 8, the "two years" of xix. 10, and the time required for the events of xix. 21-41.

<sup>4</sup> There must have been a conscious exercise of spiritual power in St. Paul as he sent the handkerchiefs, or napkins, to the various sick people ; otherwise the cures would themselves have savoured of magic. We may compare Matt. ix. 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Matt. xii. 27 ; Mark ix. 38 ; Luke ix. 49, 50, xi. 19.



of Jesus as a charm. They were signally rebuked for their profanity, so that fear fell on the Ephesians, and "the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Thus, although there were many adversaries, "a great door and effectual" was opened to the Apostle,<sup>1</sup> and the power of the Gospel over the lives of the converts was greatly increased.<sup>2</sup> Many, who, though believers, had not entirely renounced their magical arts, now brought their books of magic, and as a proof of their sincerity, "burned them before all men." The value of the manuscripts thus destroyed was nearly £2000 of our money.

Thus heathenism and its practices gave place gradually to Christianity ; but those whose interests were identified with their continuance, were roused to active and bitter opposition against the new religion. Of this we have an example in the riot of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen. The sale of their portable models of the temple of Diana and its idol rapidly declined, as the belief gained ground that "gods made with hands are no gods ;" and all the eloquence and authority of the chief magistrate were needed to quiet the enraged artificers.

We should notice, in St. Luke's account of the riot, that the priests of Artemis do not appear to have taken any part in it, and that some at any rate of the Asiarchs,<sup>3</sup> or stewards of the games, were the Apostle's friends. The higher classes in fact had lost all zeal in behalf of the old religion, and St. Paul, instead of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> As ver. 20 intimates.

<sup>3</sup> "The Chief of Asia," ver. 13. The presence of these implies that the May games were going on. "Pentecost" was in May this year (A.D. 57), and St. Paul left Ephesus immediately after that festival (1 Cor. xvi. 8). We have here an undesigned coincidence of much interest.



directly attacking it, had trusted rather to the innate power of the Gospel to make its own way.<sup>1</sup>

**Visit to Greece** (xx. 1, 2). St. Paul had laboured for three years<sup>2</sup> at Ephesus, and Christianity was not only firmly established in that great city, but its doctrines had spread, more or less, over the entire province. A great work had been accomplished ; and now the Apostle's presence being more needed in other regions he determined to revisit the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. Although St. Luke's notice of this time is of the briefest,<sup>3</sup> we know, from St. Paul's Epistles, that it was one of the most anxious and trying times of his life. The trials that were to be more or less his lot for the remainder of his life, began about this time to cast their shadow upon his path. Dangers from without, as in the disturbance raised by Demetrius, bodily sickness, and, most of all, the care of the churches, bowed down his spirit greatly. His first Epistle to the Corinthians, written towards the end of his residence at Ephesus, was sent to the Corinthian Church by Titus.<sup>4</sup> He now went to Troas, there to await the return of his messenger and deputy.<sup>5</sup> Would the Church of Corinth receive his counsel and reproof? This he longed to know ; but time passed, and Titus came not.<sup>6</sup>

Unable any longer to bear the suspense, he left Troas, and crossing into Macedonia, found consolation amongst the Christians of Philippi.<sup>7</sup> Here, at last, Titus

<sup>1</sup> See especially, vers. 36, 37. In ver. 37 "churches" is an unfortunate rendering : "temples" of R.V. is better.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Only two verses, Acts xx. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> He had despatched Timothy and Erastus a short time before to make probably arrangements for the collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Cf. 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. ii, 12, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Timothy, however, appears to have returned to the Apostle (2 Cor. i. 1) with disquieting news, which made St. Paul all the more anxious for the return of Titus.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 13.



joined him, and brought news that "filled him with comfort ;"<sup>1</sup> for the Corinthians had repented of their offences, and given heed to his reproof. Still, however, false brethren were infusing a poisonous leaven amongst them ;<sup>2</sup> and the Apostle hastened to address to the Corinthian Church, and to the other churches of Achaia, his second Epistle, which he likewise intrusted to Titus, his friend and fellow-labourer.

After despatching Titus to Corinth, with his second epistle to the Christians of that city, and before following him to the capital of Achaia, St. Paul seems to have continued his apostolic labours by visiting Illyricum, and the mountainous region of Northern Greece.<sup>3</sup> It was, probably, early winter when he approached Corinth for the second time ; not, as on the first occasion, to preach the Gospel to a people ignorant of it, but to confirm a church already founded. Unhappily, however, his task was not only to confirm, but to admonish, and even to punish ; for there were those amongst its members "who had cast off the morality of the Gospel ; friends who had forgotten his love, and enemies who disputed his divine commission." While, therefore, he came to encourage the faithful, and to restore the penitent, he was fully prepared, "in the plenitude of his apostolic power," to cast out of the Church the disobedient and the impure, as he had pledged himself to do in his last epistle.<sup>4</sup>

St. Paul remained three months in Greece, chiefly, probably at Corinth, but visiting perhaps, and confirming other neighbouring churches. St. Luke passes over this time with very few words, giving us no particulars. It was, however, in the course of this visit

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xv. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 11, 12, 17, 18.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. x. 11, xiii. 2.



to Corinth, that St. Paul wrote the very important epistle to the Christians at Rome, of whose world-renowned faith<sup>1</sup> he had heard, but whom he had not as yet seen. Rome, as we know, was in his thoughts when he was at Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> He regarded it doubtless as part of his appointed field of labour, as the Apostle of the Gentiles ; and the Lord, not very long after this time, when he was at Jerusalem, promised him that his earnest desire of preaching the Gospel in the capital of the civilized world should be accomplished.<sup>3</sup>

The Epistle to the Galatians, occasioned by some sad reports of defection of which St. Paul had heard, was also written from Corinth. Its resemblance to the Epistle to the Romans, with its greater shortness, makes it probable that it was written a little before that Epistle, of which it has been called "the rough draft."<sup>4</sup>

**Return to Jerusalem** (xx. 3-xxi. 15). A collection for the poor Jewish Christians of Palestine, had been in progress for more than a year,<sup>5</sup> and it was now intrusted to individuals, chosen by the Church, who were to accompany St. Paul to Jerusalem. St. Paul's intention of going to Syria by sea was frustrated by a plot formed by the unbelieving Jews, who appear to have been bent upon doing him some bodily harm, even, we may believe, to the cutting short his career. This obliged the Apostle to take a different route ; and, instead of embarking at Cenchrea, at which place many Jews were settled for commercial purposes, and where, probably, their conspiracy had a good

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 21 ; Rom. i. 13, xv. 22-24.

<sup>3</sup> Acts. xxiii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> The date of both Epistles would be the spring of A.D. 58.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4 ; 2 Cor. viii., ix.



prospect of success, he took the longer journey through Macedonia.

At Philippi, St. Paul was rejoined, after an interval of six years, by St. Luke, with whom he crossed over to Troas,<sup>1</sup> at which place several of the brethren were waiting for them. This visit of St. Paul to Troas (vv. 7-12) is memorable, not only for the manifestation of Christ's power and unseen presence, in the restoration of Eutychus to life through the instrumentality of His Apostle ; but also as one of the earliest notices of the observance of the Lord's Day.<sup>2</sup>

The Gentile Christians did not regard the law of the Jewish Sabbath as more binding upon them than the law of circumcision or any other Jewish ordinance ; but the first day of the week was celebrated as "the Lord's day"—the day of His Resurrection. Accordingly, on that day, we read how "the disciples came together to break bread," that is, to receive the Holy Communion together ; and we learn from early Christian writers that a sermon, the Lord's Supper, and a collection of alms for the poor, were included in the day's services.

St. Paul and his companions appear to have hired a coasting vessel in which to go as far as Patara. This was perhaps as a matter of security against the Jews. It at any rate enabled them to control the movements of the vessel, so as to stop at various places on the voyage, as it might suit them. The Apostle, sending his friends on by sea, round the promontory of Lectum, from Troas to Assos, walked himself across the neck

<sup>1</sup> The first person is resumed in xx. 5, 6. St. Luke had, apparently, remained at Philippi when St. Paul had gone on into Greece, six years before.

<sup>2</sup> A still earlier notice is found in 1 Cor. xvi. 2, and a somewhat later one in Rev. i. 10.



of the peninsula, and re-embarked at Assos.<sup>1</sup> Fearing lest a visit to Ephesus might detain him too long, and prevent his reaching Jerusalem for Pentecost, St. Paul passed by that city without stopping. A halt, however, of two or three days was made at Miletus, some twenty-eight miles south of Ephesus, to enable the Apostle to send for the elders of the Ephesian Church, and to give them a last word of exhortation.<sup>2</sup>

The discourse which St. Paul addressed to these presbyters, who had been appointed to their office by himself, is the only one of any length, spoken to believers, which St. Luke has preserved to us.

After a brief summary of the Gospel he had preached amongst them, the Apostle told these elders of the afflictions which, as the Holy Ghost showed him by the mouths of Christian prophets<sup>3</sup> in every city, were awaiting him. Yet, reflecting the conduct of the Lord, who set His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, when the hour of His passion was at hand, St. Paul's intense sense of duty<sup>4</sup> and love overmastered everything else. Nothing should hinder him, not even death itself, if only he might complete the work which the Lord Jesus had given him to do. Vindicating his life of three years amongst them, and warning them of the trials in store for them,<sup>5</sup> he exhorted them to a careful performance of the duty entrusted to them,<sup>6</sup> and to

<sup>1</sup> It is conjectured that St. Paul did this as a relief after the rough passage from Neapolis to Troas, extending over five days (xx. 6).

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul evidently thought (ver. 25) that he would never see any of them again. But it would appear from 2 Tim. iv. 20, that he did again visit Miletus in the interval between his first and second imprisonments.

<sup>3</sup> As Agabus, xxi. 10, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Expressed in the words "bound in the spirit."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17. Cerinthus, too, in St. John's time at Ephesus, some years later, was a sore trial.

<sup>6</sup> St. Paul calls them "bishops." Whilst the Apostles lived, "pres-



Christian charity and love. He encouraged them by a well-known word of the Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."<sup>1</sup>

Then the whole company knelt for prayer, and with a last affectionate embrace, the farewell was taken, and the ship sailed.

Patara reached, the coasting vessel was abandoned, and a passage taken for Syria in a trading ship. In this way they safely reached Tyre, and stayed there a week. The disciples there, warned by the Spirit, endeavoured to persuade the Apostle to discontinue his journey. But they failed. With another very affecting and prayerful farewell, on the sea shore, the Apostle and his companions took ship<sup>2</sup> once more, and, with a day's delay amongst brethren at Ptolemais,<sup>3</sup> arrived at Cæsarea. Here they were entertained by Philip the Evangelist, who seems to have lived at Cæsarea for many years.<sup>4</sup> Owing to the prophecy of Agabus, a last effort was made to dissuade St. Paul from going up to Jerusalem. But all entreaties failed to alter his determination. He was ready to die for the Lord.

And so after some further delay, the baggage was packed up,<sup>5</sup> and the journey made to Jerusalem. With St. Paul's arrival there, his third missionary journey was concluded.

byter" and "bishop" were synonymous terms; afterwards, the title of "bishop" was confined to the chief presbyters who were appointed to succeed to the oversight which had been exercised by the Apostles. For an explanation of "purchased" in ver. 28, see Eph. i. 7.

<sup>1</sup> With expressions in this address, we should compare Eph. iii. 1; Philem. 9; 2 Tim. i. 8; 1 Cor. ix. 26; Phil. iii. 11-14; 2 Tim. iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently another, not the one in which they had come from Patara.

<sup>3</sup> The modern St. Jean d Acre. Accho in Old Testament (Judg. i. 31).

<sup>4</sup> He went to Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40) after parting from the Eunuch, and had probably lived there ever since, twenty-two years.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning of the old expression, "took up our carriages," of A.V. Cf. Judg. xviii. 21; 1 Sam. xvii. 22; Isa. x. 28.



## *CHAPTER LXII.*

### **St. Paul and his Enemies.**

**DANGERS AT JERUSALEM—ADDRESS FROM THE  
CASTLE STAIRS—ST. PAUL AT CÆSAREA—FELIX.**

**S**T. PAUL in danger of his Life at Jerusalem (xxi. 16-40). On their arrival at Jerusalem, St. Paul and his party were cordially welcomed by the brethren, and accepted the hospitality of Mnason, who had been amongst the first converts.<sup>1</sup> A false report, however, had been industriously spread that the Apostle, in the course of the missionary labours, had counselled Jewish Christians to disregard the ordinances of Moses, and the laws and customs of their fathers. The weaker brethren therefore regarded him with suspicion and distrust. To avert anything like a schism, St. Paul, to whom the peace and unity of the Church were ever dear, and who, in non-essentials was always ready to become "all things to all men," adopted the advice tendered him by St. James and the elders.<sup>2</sup> He had maintained, in opposition to the Judaizers, that the ordinances of Moses, and the customs of the Jews, were not binding on Gentile Christians, but he had never taught the Jewish Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxi. 16. R.V.

<sup>2</sup> The Apostles, not being mentioned, were doubtless, at this time, absent from Jerusalem.



tians to disregard them, and he was quite willing to afford them a proof of this.

Amongst the Jewish Christians, then at Jerusalem, there were at this time four men who had the Nazarite's vow.<sup>1</sup> Acting on St. James's advice, St. Paul assisted these men to complete their vow, by paying their ceremonial expenses—a deed which was reckoned an act of piety by the Jews.

Whilst at the Temple, in fulfilment of his purpose, the Apostle fell into the hands of his most inveterate enemies, the Jews of Ephesus. Regarding St. Paul as a renegade and apostate, and supposing him to have profaned the Holy Place by taking Gentiles into it,<sup>2</sup> they dragged him out into the streets, and would have inflicted a summary punishment upon him, had he not been rescued by Lysias<sup>3</sup> and his Roman soldiers, who had hastened to the scene of tumult from the adjacent tower of Antonia.<sup>4</sup>

St. Paul was carried prisoner into the citadel, Lysias supposing him to be an Egyptian impostor, who a short time before had caused the Romans some trouble. This Egyptian had gathered around himself a number of hireling assassins,<sup>5</sup> and though utterly routed by Felix, had managed to escape. Lysias was astonished, therefore, to hear St. Paul addressing him in Greek, and at once gave him leave to speak to the people.

<sup>1</sup> See Num. vi.

<sup>2</sup> They imagined that St. Paul had allowed Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they had seen in the Apostle's company, and who, as an Ephesian, would be known perhaps to some of them, to go into the Temple with him.

<sup>3</sup> Who was the chief captain, or *tribune* in command of the *cohort*, consisting of about 1000 foot and 120 horsemen.

<sup>4</sup> The Roman soldiers quartered in this citadel were always kept under arms at the time of the Jewish festivals, to quell any popular disturbance.

<sup>5</sup> So R.V., correctly. They were called Sicarii, as being armed with a *sica*, or curved dagger, hidden under their clothes.



**St. Paul's Address on the Castle Stairs** (xxii. 1-29). He addressed his fellow countrymen in the Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, language. Silence had already been secured, but it was intensified, when the audience heard the familiar tones of their sacred tongue.

Passing rapidly in review his Jewish education, his national and religious zeal, his early hatred of Christianity, his conversion and subsequent career, the Apostle showed how he had been changed by direct revelation from God, and how, in all he had done since, he had continued to act under the Lord's direction. The crowd listened, apparently, with attention, even to the pathetic confession of his wrongfulness in consenting to the death of St. Stephen. Perhaps he had, on that very account, desired to be an Apostle of Christ to his own countrymen; perhaps he had humbly acquiesced in the decision of the Lord that Jerusalem was no fit place for him. We cannot tell; but, at any rate, he had a direct mission to the Gentiles.

At the mention of the Gentiles the fury of the Jews broke out with redoubled violence. Expressing their anger and dissent by significant actions, peculiar to the people of Eastern countries, they declared that he was unfit to live; and, had Paul been in their power, they would speedily have acted upon that conclusion.

The Roman soldiers, less cruel than his own countrymen, effectually protected him from their violence; but he was only saved from the torture of a Roman scourging by his assertion of Roman citizenship, which quickly placed him in an improved position, and secured him the favour and protection of the chief captain, who hastened to correct the dangerous mistake he had been on the point of committing.



Thus again, as in times past—at Thessalonica, at Corinth, and at Ephesus—so now at Jerusalem, did St. Paul owe his safety, and probably his life, to the Roman power, which, by-and-by, became so cruel an instrument in the persecution of the Church.

**St. Paul sent to Cæsarea** (xxii. 30-xxiii.). The unbelieving Jews, though thwarted in their design of putting St. Paul to death, succeeded but too well in depriving him of his liberty ; and thus arresting his missionary and apostolic labours. Hating the Gospel, they not only refused themselves to enter the Kingdom of the Messiah, but they hindered him from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

Lysias was probably at a loss to know what to do with a prisoner who had come into his custody in a manner so unusual, and who was charged with offences of which he could take no cognizance ; but if, like Gallio, he had treated the Jews' accusations with contempt, and restored St. Paul to liberty, the Apostle would inevitably have fallen a victim to the hatred of implacable and unscrupulous enemies. We plainly see, then, our Lord's overruling providence in the course pursued by Lysias, and in the way in which the Roman power threw its protecting influence, again and again, around Christ's chosen servant.

Claudius Lysias naturally supposed that to bring Paul before a lawful tribunal of his own countrymen was the best way of ascertaining what really was alleged against him ; so, on the morrow, he summoned the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities to sit in judgment on the man whom he had rescued from popular fury.

The spirit by which they were animated became evident, when Ananias commanded the officer to smite



the Apostle on the mouth for asserting his integrity ;<sup>1</sup> an action intended to express, symbolically, that the speaker was guilty of falsehood. If in St. Paul's answer, prophetic as it appears to have been,<sup>2</sup> his indignant feelings mastered him for a moment, he quickly recovered himself, and offered both apology and explanation. That one, who had long been absent from Jerusalem, should not know who filled an office in which there were frequent changes, was only probable, and seems to have been the plain meaning of his words.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly no fairness was to be expected from the men before whom the Apostle stood ; and his only hope of safety lay in dividing them—in working upon that party feeling, that, even in the council chamber, was ever ready to break out. Of this we have a striking example in what followed. No sooner did the Apostle declare himself a Pharisee, and a champion of their favourite doctrine, the Resurrection from the dead, than the Pharisees and Sadducees, who composed the council, became excited against each other. The Pharisees took the Apostle's part, while the Sadducees answered them with derisive shouts ; and in a little while the confusion and uproar were so great, that Claudius Lysias, alarmed for the safety of his prisoner, sent his soldiers to bring St. Paul, for whose life, as a Roman citizen, he was answerable, once more into the citadel.

That night, as the Apostle lay in the Roman barracks, sadly pondering upon the events of the day, his only human protectors being the foreign soldiers who had

<sup>1</sup> And perhaps for omitting the respectful title " fathers."

<sup>2</sup> Josephus informs us that Ananias was killed by the Zealots at the commencement of the Jewish War.

<sup>3</sup> Some have thought that St. Paul's words had to do with dimness of sight, or perhaps want of reflection.



twice rescued him from his own countrymen, Jesus stood once more beside him, speaking words of consolation, and assuring him that, as he had testified of Him in Jerusalem, so, likewise, should he be a witness for His truth at Rome also. Thus encouraged, how truly must Paul have rejoiced in tribulations that brought his Lord so near to him ; and henceforth, how calmly must he have rested in His almighty protection !

St. Paul's enemies, impatient of the risks and chances of any legal process for insuring his condemnation, bound themselves by a terrible oath either to kill him, before they ate or drank, or to be held accursed from God. In this plot the chief priests and elders readily took part, so debased had the leading men of the Jewish nation become.

Happily, and as we may say providentially, the nephew of St. Paul had become aware of the conspiracy, and carried the information to the Roman commander. Lysias' measures were quickly taken. The same evening he sent St. Paul away, under a strong escort, a journey of seventy miles, across the high mountainous country which separates the Jordan valley from the western plain, to Cæsarea, on the sea coast of the Mediterranean, and the residence of the Roman procurator. Here the centurion in charge of the Apostle delivered his prisoner and the letter<sup>1</sup> which Lysias had written, into the hands of Felix, the governor, an unprincipled and profligate man.

**St. Paul before Felix** (xxiv.). After five days, Ananias, the high priest, and others of St. Paul's enemies, arrived at Cæsarea, and preferred their

<sup>1</sup> This letter was a "dexterous suppression of the truth, which falls little short of falsehood. It states facts, but not in the order of their occurrence."



charge against him. They, being themselves ignorant of Roman law, employed as counsel for the prosecution an orator, apparently of some note, named Tertullus. This man preferred against the Apostle three charges : (1) that he had caused disturbances ; (2) that he was, as we should say, a heretic ; and (3) that he had profaned the Temple.

To all these accusations Paul had a ready answer. He had done nothing to cause excitement, much less sedition, in Jerusalem ; for neither in the synagogues nor in the city, had he disputed with any one. As for heresy, he believed the law and the prophets, and in the resurrection from the dead ; and he trained himself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men ; whilst, far from profaning the Temple, he had, after purification, gone there with alms and offerings. The allegations of the Jews were false therefore, and they could not prove them ; and those Jews of Asia who had seized Paul in the Temple had not appeared before Felix to make good their accusations. Had Felix been an upright judge, he would have acquitted Paul and set him at liberty without delay : but that was not his policy. His answer was evasive—“When Lysias comes down I will decide finally between you.” And so, placing the Apostle in military custody, and commanding that he should have every privilege consistent with safe keeping, he deferred the decision of the case, until it should suit him to give his judgment upon it.

Some short time after, Felix, who seems to have been absent for a while from Cæsarea, returned with Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa,<sup>1</sup> and formerly the wife of the King of Emera, whom she had

<sup>1</sup> See Acts xii.



deserted for Felix. To gratify, probably, Drusilla's curiosity about the remarkable prisoner now in custody, Felix "sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." The audience was of course private, and the Apostle evidently spoke with more freedom than was possible in a court of justice. His words produced a very great effect upon Felix, for the moment ; but he steeled his heart against them. Yet, in the hope of receiving a bribe from St. Paul for his freedom, he often sent for him. But although his detention must have proved a very severe trial to the Apostle, he disdained to obtain his freedom by any dishonest or unworthy means. He was content to abide the Lord's time for the further delivery of his message. And Felix too, at length, after two years,<sup>1</sup> was called away to Rome to answer charges against his administration. Knowing that he needed powerful friends, and wishing to secure the support of the Jewish party, he left Paul a prisoner.

<sup>1</sup> An important notice of time. Festus succeeded Felix, A.D. 60 or 61. It was during these two years probably that St. Luke wrote his Gospel.



## CHAPTER LXIII.

### The Appeal to Cæsar.

ST. PAUL AND FESTUS—ST. PAUL AND AGRIPPA.

**ST. PAUL and Festus** (xxv. 1-12). In the time of St. Paul, Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judæa, was in all its glory, "a city of sumptuous palaces," combining all that was needful for magnificence, amusement, and health. It stood near the boundary of Galilee and Samaria; and in its harbour, protected as it was by a stupendous breakwater, ships found a safe anchorage and a complete shelter from the swell of the Mediterranean sea, which set in upon the coast from the south-west.<sup>1</sup> Here was the residence of the Roman procurator, and the quarters of the imperial troops; and, though built and finished in twelve years by Herod the Great, an Idumæan prince, it boasted of Greek temples and statues, a theatre and an amphitheatre; while, to a traveller, approaching it from the sea, the most conspicuous object was a temple dedicated to Cæsar and to Rome. The impress of Rome was, indeed, designedly stamped upon the place. Its harbour was called the "Augustan harbour," and the city itself was known as "Augustan Cæsarea."

Such was the political capital<sup>2</sup> of Judæa, in which

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus calls it "Judææ caput" (Hist. ii. 79). Its full name was Cæsarea Sebaste.



St. Paul was detained by the injustice and caprice of Felix. Here he passed two years of unwilling inactivity, chained day and night to a Roman soldier, and unable to communicate, except through friends, with the churches he had planted, and whose welfare he had watched over with so anxious and tender a solicitude.

At last the misrule of the governor resulted in disturbances at Cæsarea, and an increasing hatred to Roman domination throughout the country. Felix was in consequence summoned to Rome to give an account of his administration; and thither the Jews followed him with their accusations, A.D. 60.

Festus, who was then appointed Procurator of Judæa, was a much better man than Felix; yet his accession to power was attended by a new danger to Paul.

Festus had only been three days in Cæsarea when he "went up to Jerusalem" to make himself better acquainted with the people he had come to govern, and to win such popularity as might be got by courtesy and consideration. Hence, for the governed, it was a good opportunity for asking favours; and we find Paul's enemies, described by St. Luke as "the high priest and the chief of the Jews," urging, with all importunity, that he might be brought back to Jerusalem, on the plea, doubtless, that he should be tried before the Sanhedrin. But their real purpose was to kill the Apostle. Festus, however, did not weakly yield to the injustice of giving up a prisoner who claimed, in virtue of his citizenship, to be tried before the Roman tribunal, and who had been removed from the jurisdiction of the Jewish authorities because of their excited and prejudiced feelings against him. Festus's answer was therefore firm, though courteous. It was not, he



said, the custom of the Romans to deliver up a man who might be innocent to his enemies. The accused was in custody at Cæsarea, whither he would himself return shortly. Let those who wished to prefer a charge against him go down to Cæsarea, and there state their case.

Accordingly, when, after eight or ten days, Festus returned to Cæsarea, a deputation from the Sanhedrin waited upon him, and the next day the governor had Paul brought before him. The charges preferred against him were substantially the same as before. They declared him guilty of heresy, sacrilege, and treason ; but they failed entirely to prove the truth of their accusations. Festus perceived at once that Paul was not accused of political crimes, of which a Roman magistrate could take cognizance, but of offences against the religion of the Jews, of which he knew nothing. Partly, therefore, to get rid of the difficulty, but chiefly to conciliate the Jews, he asked Paul whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem, there to be judged by a tribunal of his own countrymen. This vacillating conduct would have ended in placing the Apostle in the hands of enemies bent upon his destruction, had not the Apostle promptly exercised his right as a Roman citizen, and, by appealing to Cæsar, taken his case altogether out of the hands of the procurator.<sup>1</sup>

“I am,” he said, “already standing before a Roman tribunal, why then should I be removed to

<sup>1</sup> In all the provinces of the Roman Empire, the supreme judicial and executive power was vested in the Roman governors, whether proconsuls, proprætors, or procurators, and for the provincials their decisions were final, unless they were Roman citizens. One who had the franchise of Rome had the right of appealing to the Emperor, who constitutionally exercised the power of reversing the judgments of all inferior authorities.



Jerusalem, where the Jews will have me in their power? I have done them no wrong, as thou thyself perceivest by the failure of their accusation. If I have wronged them, put me to death thyself, as thou hast power to do ; but if not, no man can deliver me up to them, and no man shall ; for I appeal unto Cæsar.”<sup>1</sup>

Festus, upon this, conferred with his council, as to the legality of his prisoner's appeal, and finding it perfectly admissible, he at once allowed it. Thus the malice of the Jews and the indecision of Festus were used by the Lord to bring about His own Divine purpose of conducting His Apostle to Rome.

**St. Paul and Agrippa** (xxv. 13-xxvi. 32). Festus had, indeed, no choice but to send the Apostle to Rome. He knew well, however, the frivolous nature of the charges preferred against St. Paul, but, at the same time, had no clear perception of the nature of this Jewish quarrel. He did not know how to state it in his report to the emperor. He was very glad, therefore, to have the advice of Herod Agrippa II.,<sup>2</sup> King of Chalcis, who, accompanied by his sister, Bernice,<sup>3</sup> had come to pay a complimentary visit to the new governor of Judæa. It was not till “after many days” that Festus spoke to his guest about St. Paul. He then described him as “a certain man left in bonds by

<sup>1</sup> Humphry.

<sup>2</sup> Son of Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii.). He was only seventeen years old, at the time of his father's death, in A.D. 44, and was considered too young to succeed to the kingdom. Subsequently, however, he was made King of Chalcis, and Tetrarch of Trachonitis and Abilene. He had considerable knowledge of the Jewish law, and at this time was superintendent of the Temple, with the power of appointing the high priest. After the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, he retired to Rome, and died there in A.D. 99, aged about seventy.

<sup>3</sup> She was sister also of Drusilla, the wife of Felix, who perished in the eruption of Vesuvius, in A.D. 72. Bernice was a beautiful princess, but one of the most profligate women of her day.



Felix," and explained matters to Agrippa. The explanations of Festus were not altogether truthful,<sup>1</sup> but they made Agrippa wish to see the prisoner himself. An audience was arranged for the next day.

Accordingly, Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, accompanied by the chief captains and principal men of the city, took their seats on the morrow with great pomp in the judgment hall, and the order was given for the prisoner to be brought before them. Then, after a preliminary statement by Festus of the cause which had brought them together, Agrippa gave St. Paul permission to speak. The defence which the Apostle put forth is the last and most famous of his speeches preserved to us by St. Luke.

Passing by the accusations of profaning the Temple and apostatizing from the Jews' religion, he took the higher ground of an Apostle and Messenger of God ; his object being, it would seem, not so much to defend himself as to bring the truth home to his hearers, and to witness for his Lord before kings and rulers. And this he did with great pathos and solemnity, explaining to Agrippa that his only crime was in believing that the hope of the Jews—the hope of a Messiah—had been fulfilled in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. Then he related the wonderful story of his conversion, and how, in obedience to the heavenly vision, he had proclaimed the good tidings throughout all the land of Judæa and also to the Gentiles, witnessing both to small and great the things that Moses had said should come—that Christ should suffer, and that He should rise from the dead ; and for this it was that the Jews sought his life.

To Festus—unacquainted as he was with the religion

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts xxv. 9 and xxv. 20.



of the Jews, and accustomed to the indifference to all moral and religious questions that was general amongst the educated Romans of his day—the marvellous story, the strange doctrines and the thrilling earnestness of the Jewish orator, seemed but the offspring of an excited imagination overset by constant study of the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Paul appealed to Agrippa's better knowledge of the matters of which he spoke in proof of his soberness. Then turning solemnly to the Jewish prince, the fearless Apostle exclaimed, with increasing earnestness, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

The appeal was not without its effect upon the ambitious and pleasure-loving Agrippa. Half in jest, half in earnest, he exclaimed, with an evident allusion to the Apostle's own conversion, "Thou wouldst persuade me to embrace the faith of Christ, as suddenly as thou didst thyself."<sup>2</sup> Holding up his chained wrist, St. Paul, taking up the words in all seriousness, replied that he did indeed wish that both Agrippa and all who were there listening to him were such as he, except in regard to his bonds.

The sitting was now broken up, and had he not already appealed unto Cæsar, would have resulted, most probably, in the release of the Apostle.

Festus died when he had been governor of Judæa about two years. Agrippa and Bernice lived out their brief day of ambition, and their names are only remembered in connection with the Jewish prisoner, to whose story of Jesus as the Messiah, fulfilling all

<sup>1</sup> For the result of his study see *e.g.* xxviii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> This is now generally agreed to be the meaning of Agrippa. The "almost" of A.V. gives the wrong idea. R.V.—"with but little persuasion"—seems to hover between the two renderings. Cf. Eph. iii. 3, where the same expression is rendered, "in few words."



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS LXV., LXVI.

### ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES, GROUPED ACCORDING TO DATE.

- I. Epistles of the Second Missionary Journey.
  1. First Thessalonians from Corinth. Autumn A.D. 52.
  2. Second Thessalonians from Corinth. Spring or Summer A.D. 53.
- II. Epistles of the Third Missionary Journey.
  3. First Corinthians, from Ephesus. Spring A.D. 57.
  4. Second Corinthians, from Philippi. Autumn A.D. 57.
  5. Galatians, from Corinth. Winter A.D. 57-58.
  6. Romans, from Corinth. Spring A.D. 58.
- III. Epistles of the First Roman Imprisonment.
  7. Philippians, from Rome. Early (?) A.D. 62.
  8. Ephesians, ,, ,, Later (?) A.D. 62.
  9. Colossians, ,, ,, ,, ,,
  10. Philemon, ,, ,, ,, ,,
- IV. Epistles of the last year of the Apostle's life.
  11. Titus, from Corinth. Early A.D. 67.
  12. First Timothy, from Nicopolis. Later A.D. 67.
  13. Second Timothy, from Rome. A.D. 68.
  14. The Epistle to the Hebrews, if St. Paul's, may be assigned to A.D. 67 or 68.



## *CHAPTER LXIV.*

### **St. Paul and Rome.**

**THE Voyage and Shipwreck** (xxvii.). Within a short time of the scene described in our last chapter, arrangements were made for the conveyance of the Apostle, and a number of other prisoners, to Rome.

St. Luke's account of the voyage and shipwreck of St. Paul is so simple and natural, and yet so accurate and circumstantial, that, while it pleases the child and attracts the general reader, it is studied by nautical men with a true professional interest.<sup>1</sup>

In our own day, when magnificently appointed steam vessels convey passengers, with the utmost speed and comfort, between ports separated by half the circumference of the globe, such a voyage as that of St. Paul's from Cæsarea to Rome would be regarded merely as a few days' pleasant sailing; but it was very different in the days of the Apostle. In those times kings and emperors, and other great personages, were fain to betake themselves to the only means of sea-transport then open to travellers, of whatever rank; and this was the merchant ship. And when we consider the ancient merchantman, with

<sup>1</sup> As an interesting case in point, we are told that Nelson read the 27th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles on the eve of the Battle of Copenhagen.—DEAN HOWSON.



address, such as one resident in Judæa might make to his brethren scattered through the Roman empire.

That the writer had also been an attentive listener to the teaching of Jesus Christ is evident from the manner in which that teaching permeates the whole Epistle. Our thoughts, as we read, are carried back once and again to the Sermon on the Mount.

We conclude therefore that the author was one of the persons of the name of James mentioned in the Gospels or Acts.

James the son of Zebedee is excluded, because of his early martyrdom,<sup>1</sup> which happened about eleven or twelve years after the Ascension, long before this Epistle could have been written. The Epistle assumes that the Gospel had been widely spread amongst the Jews of the Dispersion, and that the name of "Christian" had already become general.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of James the son of Zebedee, the Lord's brother of the same name was the most prominent James amongst the early Christians. He was recognized as the head of the Jerusalem Church. In this position of high authority, he presided over the great Council of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 51. St. Paul mentions him, as an Apostle, at the time of his own first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.<sup>3</sup>

Fourteen years later, St. Paul mentions him as one of the "pillars" of the Church.<sup>4</sup> St. Peter desired that his release from prison should be announced to James,<sup>5</sup> and it was to James that St. Paul reported himself on his arrival at Jerusalem at the close of his third great journey. St. James, on this occasion, took upon himself to offer advice to St. Paul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xii. 2.      <sup>2</sup> Jas. i. 1, ii. 7.      <sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 19. About A.D. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. ii. 9. About A.D. 51.      <sup>5</sup> Acts xii. 17.      <sup>6</sup> Acts xxi. 18-26.



its two paddle-rudders, its single mast, enormous yard, and clumsy build, and its 'commander ignorant of the use of the compass, and destitute of aids at all to be compared to our modern charts and instruments of navigation, we shall see how greatly it differed from the finely proportioned clipper-ship that now bears the manufactures of this country to distant lands, and brings their produce to our own shores.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that the men who composed the garrison of Cæsarea were mostly natives of Syria ; but the "Augustan cohort" consisted, it would seem, of Roman soldiers. It was to Julius, a centurion of this "Augustus' band," that Paul and certain other prisoners were delivered ; amongst them, it would seem, was Aristarchus of Thessalonica, one of the Apostle's fellow-labourers.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke probably went as a passenger. He tells us how, on a certain day, they embarked in "a ship of Adramyttium,"—a coasting vessel trading, it would seem, to the ports on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. On leaving Sidon the next day, the westerly wind was unfavourable to a ship sailing to the western "coasts of Asia," and so, instead of running its direct course to the south of Cyprus, the vessel kept to the north, making its way between that island and the mainland. The strong current that sets in from east to west along the southern coasts of Asia Minor, together with the smoother water and land wind, would enable them to work to windward as far as the Lycian port of Myra.

Here the centurion transferred his prisoners and their guard to a corn-ship of Alexandria, bound for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts xix. 29 ; Col. iv. 10 ; Philem. 24.



as we know, he was held by the unbelieving Jews of Jerusalem, made his recognition as the head of the Church in the Holy City at once natural and fitting.<sup>1</sup>

**Time of Writing.** St. James perished in the great persecution of A.D. 62. His Epistle was written probably not long before, as a result perhaps of St. Paul's report of his ministry in "foreign parts," given in A.D. 58.

**To whom addressed.** These are "the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad," *i.e.* to the Hebrew Christians living in the various cities and towns of the Roman Empire, and in other parts of the world.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Introductory greeting. i. 1.
- II. The true view of temptation. i. 2-15.
- III. Difference between hearing and doing. i. 16-27.
- IV. True faith shown by its works ; especially works of self denying love. ii. 1-26.
- V. The government of the tongue, difficult, but necessary, issuing in peace. iii. 1-18.
- VI. Selfishness and spiritual pride, the cause of hatings and quarrels. iv. 1-17.
- VII. Exhortation to a high-toned life of active faith. v. 1-20.

### The First Epistle of St. Peter.

**Authorship.** There has never been any reasonable doubt but that the author of this Epistle was the Apostle St. Peter. It is quoted by Christian writers

<sup>1</sup> If he were one of the Twelve, he would have to be identified with James, the son of Alphæus ; an identification full of difficulties. The Twelve, moreover, were under an obligation to leave Jerusalem, "to preach the Gospel to every creature." One who was not of their number would be under no such obligation.



To this James, as its author, by others, early always been a *century*. The Epistle itself bears Two ques- *century*. The Epistle itself bears are we to *century* of the influence of our Lord's brother? *century* example upon St. Peter, whilst its seems to suggest to us the result of been *century* ministerial work upon the once eager *century*, though loving disciple.

Whom addressed. The persons to whom C. wrote were Jewish Christians dwelling *century* the Gentiles in five of the provinces of that *century* of the Roman empire which we now call Asia *century*. Many of these had probably been converted *century* St. Paul, when on his missionary journeys. We *century*, however, no work in Pontus or Bithynia recorded *century* that Apostle. It has been thought probable that *century* the Gospel was preached in those provinces during *century* St. Paul's lengthened stay at Ephesus, by some of his *century* companions in travel.

The nature of St. Peter's connection with these Jewish Christians of Asia Minor is entirely a matter of conjecture. It was, however, not improbably, of a personal character. St. Paul records an agreement made between himself, and "James, Cephas (Peter) and John," that he "should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." That this was not intended to restrict the elder Apostles to Judæa seems evident, not only from the early traditions of the Church, but from the fact that we have a visit of St. Peter to Antioch mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>1</sup> He may very well have then been on a missionary tour to his own countrymen in the various districts of Asia Minor. The many expres-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 11.



st Epistle resembling others in the Paul suggest also the possibility that it dated these districts after those Epistles had been written, and had become widely circulated.<sup>1</sup>

**and Time of Writing.** In the conclusions, salutations, St. Peter dates his Epistle from Babylon. It has been very widely supposed that this is a mystical expression for Rome, just as St. John in the Revelation speaks of the Roman empire under the same name. But that St. Peter should adopt such a method of speech in the closing words of an Epistle, without apparently any kind of necessity, is, to say the least, highly improbable. On the other hand, we may think of it as extremely likely that in the course of a widely extended missionary journey St. Peter should visit that part of the ancient world, where there was still a large Jewish population.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming then that the ruined, but still existing, city of Babylon is intended, it would appear that Silvanus, the Silas of the Acts, had recently brought him news of the Churches of Asia Minor, and that the Apostle was availing himself of the return of Silvanus to send a letter to his brethren, the Jewish Christians of those parts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *e.g.* 1 Pet. i. 3 and Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. ii. 6-10 and Rom. ix. 25, 33; 1 Pet. ii. 18; Eph. vi. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 1 and Eph. v. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 22 and Eph. i. 21, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 Pet. v. 13, the words "Church that is" are not in the original, according to nearly all the manuscripts. We may render "The co-elect at Babylon," and, remembering that the word is feminine and in the singular, think with some that St. Peter's wife is intended, the faithful companion, as it would seem (1 Cor. ix. 5), of his missionary labours.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12. The order in which the provinces are mentioned in chap. i. 1, suggests a person writing from the East rather than the West. That St. Peter should write from the literal Babylon in no way militates against the ancient tradition of the Church that he, as well as St. Paul, suffered Martyrdom at Rome, during the Neronian persecution, in A.D. 67 or 68.



Marcus, in whom we recognize the John Mark of the Acts, the intimate friend and companion of three Apostles, was with St. Peter at the time. Not long afterwards, he had rejoined Timothy,<sup>1</sup> and was on his way to Rome, whither, as is most likely, St. Peter was also travelling, either freely, or perhaps bound as a prisoner.

Silvanus had brought the news of a terrible persecution raging against the Christians. It was a "fiery trial;" but let them "cast all their care" upon God, and it would pass in due time, and its issue would be their being "perfected, stablished, strengthened, settled."<sup>2</sup> Thus the Apostle sent to them his word of comfort and consolation and encouragement. And as he wrote, there was ever present to his mind the example of His Divine Lord. That example he presses upon his brethren as the only right one to follow.

The time of this persecution was doubtless the reign of Nero, and we may therefore date the Epistle about the year A.D. 64.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Salutation. i. 1, 2.
- II. Blessedness of the Christian, even in times of trial.  
i. 3-12.
- III. Exhortation consequent upon this, with further statement of the Christian's privileges. i. 13-ii. 10.
- IV. The Christian's duties as a citizen, and in his home.  
ii. 11-iii. 7.
- V. Exhortations to unity, patience and holiness of life. iii. 8-iv. 11.
- VI. Encouragement to bear persecution bravely. iv. 12-19.
- VII. Exhortations to the different sections of the Church—to the elders—to the younger. v. 1-11.
- VIII. Conclusion. v. 12-14.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 12, 16, v. 7, 10.



## The Second Epistle of St. Peter.

**Authorship.** Unlike the first Epistle, the authenticity of this second Epistle was for a long time held to be doubtful, so that it was not until the Council of Laodiceæ, in A.D. 366, that it was formally admitted into the Canon of Scripture. There is no lack of evidence that the Epistle was widely known at an early date, although not generally recognized as St. Peter's. Perhaps the troublous time in which evidently it was written, and the character of its language, may have had much to do, at first, with its reception, or otherwise, as a true work of St. Peter.

But when we turn to the Epistle itself there is much to make us feel sure, in spite of certain differences, that it came from the same hand as the first Epistle.

We note, first of all, that the Apostle calls himself "Symeon," a rare form in the New Testament for the more usual "Simon,"<sup>1</sup> and one most unlikely to be used by a forger. The touching reference to the writer's presence at the Transfiguration, with the remarkable use of the words "tabernacle" and "decease" in close proximity to that reference, brings St. Peter irresistibly before us.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing the two Epistles, we find in each the same anticipation of the approach of the end of the world ;<sup>3</sup> in each the Flood is mentioned, and that with

<sup>1</sup> The form "Symeon," as the name of the Apostle, only occurs here and in Acts xv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 14, 17. Cf. Luke ix. 31, 33. In 2 Pet. i. 14 there seems to be an allusion to our Lord's prophecy of the Apostle's death in John xxi. 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5, iv. 7 ; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 10-14.



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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER LII.—LXIV.

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3. The Ascension of Jesus. i. 9-11.
4. The Disciples in the Upper Room. i. 12-14.
5. Place of the Traitor filled by the Election of Matthias to the Apostleship. i. 15-26.

#### II. The Founding of the Church. ii. 1-v. 42.

1. *Promise of the Father fulfilled.* ii. 1-47.

Including—

- (a) Descent of the Holy Spirit. ii. 1-13.
- (b) St. Peter's Sermon. ii. 14-36.
- (c) Effects of the Sermon. ii. 37-47.
2. *The Work of the Comforter through the Apostles.* iii. 1-v. 42.

Including—

- (a) Healing of the Lame Man. iii. 1-26.
- (b) Arrest of Peter and John; their Defence before the Council. iv. 1-22.
- (c) Their Release; Thanksgiving of the Church; shown practically in Deeds of Charity. iv. 23-37.
- (d) Case of Ananias and Sapphira. v. 1-11.
- (e) Arrest of the Apostles; their Defence and Miraculous Release; their Fresh Arrest. v. 12-33.
- (f) Advice of Gamaliel; Release of the Apostles. v. 34-42.



III. Organization of the Church. vi. 1-xii. 23.

1. *Early Troubles.* vi. 1-vii. 60.

Including—

(a) Election and Ordination of the Seven Deacons. vi. 1-7.

(b) Persecution, Defence, and Death of St. Stephen. vi. 8-vii. 60.

2. *Results of Persecution.* viii. 1-ix. 30.

Including—

(a) The scattered Disciples preach the Word everywhere. viii. 1-4.

(b) Conversion of the Samaritans by Philip ; the First Confirmation ; Simon Magus. viii. 5-25.

(c) Philip and the Eunuch. viii. 26-40.

(d) Conversion of Saul. ix. 1-30.

3. *Quiet Times.* ix. 31-43.

Including—

(a) St. Peter and Æneas. ix. 31-35.

(b) St. Peter and Dorcas. ix. 36-43.

4. *Preparation for Extension of the Church to the Gentiles.* x. 1-xi. 30.

Including—

(a) St. Peter and Cornelius. x. 1-48.

(b) St. Peter's Explanation to the Jerusalem Church. xi. 1-18.

(c) The Gospel preached at Antioch ; first use of the name "Christian." xi. 19-26.

(d) Kindly intercourse between the Antioch and Jerusalem Churches, through Barnabas and Saul, xi. 27-30.

5. *Persecution renewed.* xii. 1-23.

Including—

(a) Martyrdom of St. James. xii. 1, 2.

(b) Imprisonment and Miraculous Deliverance of St. Peter. xii. 3-19.

(c) Death of Herod Agrippa I. xii. 20-23.

IV. The Gospel preached among the Gentiles. xii. 24-xxi. 19.



**1. *Call of Barnabas and Saul to the Mission Work ; their First Journey.*** xii. 24-xiv. 28.

Including—

- (a) Their Return from Jerusalem to Antioch. xii. 24, 25.
  - (b) Their Call to the Apostleship of the Gentiles. xiii. 1-3.
  - (c) Their *First Missionary Journey* ; the Gospel preached in Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. xiii. 4-xiv. 28.
- 2. *First Council at Jerusalem ; Decision in favour of the Gentile Christians.*** xv. 1-35.
- 3. *St. Paul's (Saul's) Second Missionary Journey.*** xv. 36-xviii. 22.

Including—

- (a) Dispute between Paul and Barnabas. xv. 36-40.
  - (b) St. Paul's journey through Asia Minor, "Confirming the Churches." xv. 41-xvi. 8.
  - (c) The Call to Europe ; the Gospel preached at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. xvi. 9-xvii. 14.
  - (d) St. Paul at Athens. xvii. 15-34.
  - (e) St. Paul at Corinth ; Aquila and Priscilla. xviii. 1-17.
  - (f) Return by Ephesus and Jerusalem to Antioch. xviii. 18-22.
- 4. *St. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.*** xviii. 23-xxi. 19.

Including—

- (a) Visitation of the Churches of Galatia and Phrygia. xviii. 23.
  - (b) Account of Apollos. xviii. 24-28.
  - (c) St. Paul at Ephesus ; Second recorded Confirmation ; Miracles ; Uproar by Demetrius. xix. 1-41.
  - (d) Visitation of the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia. xx. 1-3.
  - (e) Return of St. Paul through Philippi and Miletum to Cæsarea and Jerusalem. xx. 3-xxi. 19.
- V. *St. Paul, a Prisoner.*** xxi. 20-xxviii. 31.



**1. *The Apostle at Jerusalem.* xxi. 20-xxiii. 35.**

**Including—**

- (a) His undertaking the charge of Four Nazarites. xxi. 20-27.
- (b) His apprehension and danger, but rescue by Lysias. xxi. 27-40.
- (c) St. Paul's Defence to the People. xxii. 1-23.
- (d) His claim to the privilege of Roman Citizenship. xxii. 24-29.
- (e) His Defence before the Council. xxii. 30-xxiii. 10.
- (f) His Removal to Cæsarea. xxiii. 11-35.

**2. *St. Paul at Cæsarea.* xxiv. 1-xxvi. 32.**

**Including—**

- (a) St. Paul and Felix. xxiv. 1-27.
- (b) St. Paul and Festus. xxv. 1-27.
- (c) St. Paul and Herod Agrippa II. xxvi. 1-32.

**3. *The Voyage to Rome.* xxvii. 1-xxviii. 31.**

**Including—**

- (a) Narrative of the Shipwreck. xxvii. 1-44.
- (b) St. Paul in Melita. xxviii. 1-10.
- (c) Journey from Melita to Rome. xxviii. 11-16.
- (d) St. Paul calls together, and explains matters to, the Chief of the Jews at Rome. xxviii. 17-29.
- (e) He remains a Prisoner for two years, yet is able to preach the Gospel in his own hired house. xxviii. 30, 31.



## THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS.

[TAKEN FROM NORRIS' KEY TO THE ACTS.]

A.D.		ACTS.
	Tiberius Emperor since Aug. 19, A.D. 14.	
	Pontius Pilate Procurator since A.D. 26.	
	Caiaphas High Priest since A.D. 25.	
29	Ascension . . . . .	i. 9
	Pentecost . . . . .	ii. 1
	Lame man healed . . . . .	iii. 1
	Arrest of Peter and John . . . . .	iv. 1
	Death of Ananias and Sapphira . . . . .	v. 1
	The Twelve imprisoned . . . . .	v. 18
34	Appointment of the Seven . . . . .	vi. 1
36	Pilate ordered to Rome by Vitellius.	
	Vitellius visits Jerusalem ; deposes Caiaphas.	
	Stephen's Martyrdom . . . . .	vii. 1
	Saul's Persecution . . . . .	viii. 3
	Dispersion ; Philip's ministry . . . . .	viii. 4
	Foundation of Church in Samaria . . . . .	viii. 14
	Saul's Conversion . . . . .	ix. 1
37	CAIUS GALIGULA Emperor.	
38	Saul escapes from Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 32).	
	His brief visit to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 18)	ix. 26
	He retires to Tarsus . . . . .	ix. 30
	Herod Agrippa visits his Tetrarchies.	
39	Herod Antipas banished to Lyons.	
40	Caius orders his statue to be set up in the Temple.	
	The Churches of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee "have rest" . . . . .	ix. 31
	Peter's visit to Cornelius . . . . .	x. 1
	Rise of Gentile Church at Antioch . . . . .	xi. 20
	Barnabas fetches Saul from Tarsus . . . . .	xi. 28
41	CLAUDIUS Emperor, Jan. 24.	



A. D.		ACTS.
	Herod Agrippa made King of Judæa.	
44	He kills James and imprisons Peter . Peter (and all the Apostles ?) leaves Jeru- salem . . . . .	xii. 1 xii. 17
44	Herod's death ; Cuspius Fadus Procurator The Famine. Barnabas and Saul go with alms to { Jerusalem . . . . . }	xii. 17 xi. 30 xii. 25
46	Ordination of Barnabas and Saul . . . . .	xiii. 3
	Their Missionary Tour to the Gentiles.	
48	Their return to Antioch, and abode there. Ananias made High Priest.	xiv. 28
49	Herod Agrippa II. King of Chalcis.	
50	Council at Jerusalem . . . . . Peter rebuked by Paul at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11).	xv. 1
51	Paul sets forth on Second Mission with Silas . . . . .	xv. 40
	Finds Timothy at Lystra . . . . .	xvi. 1
	Founds Galatian Churches . . . . .	xvi. 6
52	Crosses over into Europe . . . . .	xvi. 11
	Founds Churches of Philippi and Thes- salonica . . . . .	xvii. 1
	Paul at Athens . . . . .	xvii. 15
	Reaches Corinth late in the year . . . . .	xviii. 1
53	Writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians (Felix Pro- curator) ; H. Agrippa II. King of Trachonitis.	
54	Quits Corinth in spring ; a few days at Ephesus . . . . .	xviii. 18
	Keeps Pentecost at Jerusalem . . . . .	xviii. 22
	After a few weeks at Antioch, sets forth on Third Missionary Journey . . . . .	
	Arrives at Ephesus . . . . .	xix. 1
	Founds Ephesian Church (3 years) ; writes 1 Corinthians.	
57	Leaves Ephesus in spring ; writes 2 Cor- inthians from Philippi in autumn.	xx. 1
	NERO Emperor, Oct. 13.	
	Three months at Corinth ; writes Gala- tians and Romans . . . . .	xx. 3
58	Passover at Philippi ; a week at Troas Farewell Address to Ephesian Presbyters Arrives at Jerusalem . . . . .	xx. 6 xx. 17 xxi. 17



A. D.		ACTS.
	Arrested about Pentecost (May 9) .	xxi. 33
	Defence before Sanhedrin; sent to Cæsarea . . . . .	xxiii. I
	Defence before Felix and Ananias .	xxiv. I
	Two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea.	
60	Festus succeeds Felix as Procurator .	xxiv. 27
	St. Paul, accused by Jews, appeals to Cæsar . . . . .	xxv. I
	Defence before Agrippa and Festus .	xxvi. I
	Embarks for Italy (autumn) . . . .	xxvii. I
	Shipwreck; three winter months in Melita . . . . .	xxviii. I-10
61	Lands at Puteoli; reaches Rome (spring)	xxviii. 14
	Two years in military custody at Rome.	
	Writes Epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.	
62	Martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother.	
	Paul again imprisoned at Rome.	
68	Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the last year of Nero, according to Jerome.	



## *CHAPTER LXV.*

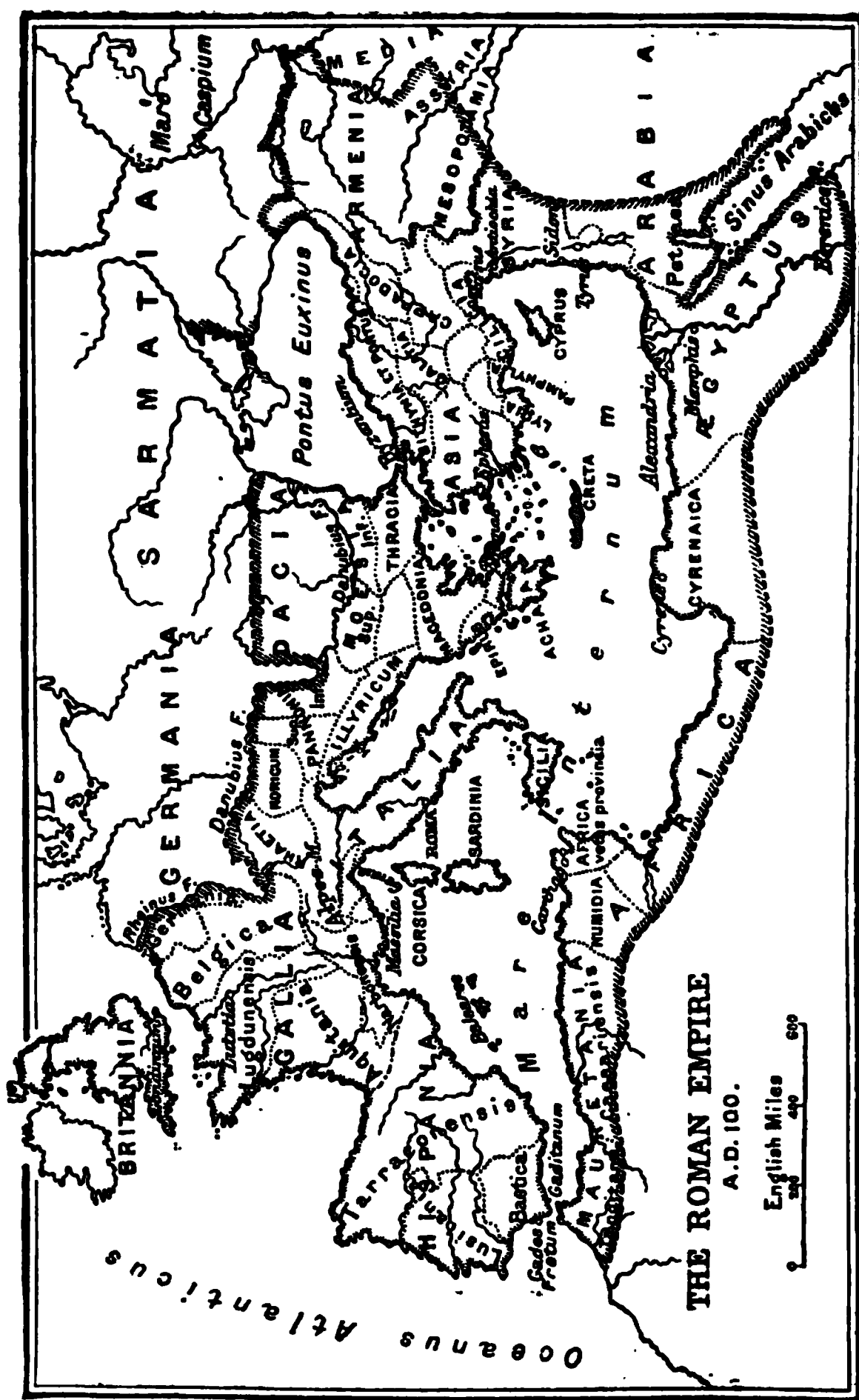
### **St. Paul's Epistles.**

**T**HE great Apostle to the Gentiles, intensely anxious for the Churches which he had founded in various parts of the Roman empire, wrote to them many letters or epistles. These inspired documents all bear the impress of the great mind of him who could "be all things to all men," and are full of fire and earnestness, and of passionate love for Christ his Divine Master, and for his children in the faith. Yet they are marked by a wonderful calmness of judgment, and a deep current of strong common sense. Whilst they do not set impossibilities before us, they nevertheless set Jesus Christ before us, not only as the one Mediator between God and Man, but as the one Great Example, the copying of which is to be the aim of every Christian.

These Epistles were written at different times, and under varying circumstances, and differ therefore in the subjects of which they treat. Thirteen, or perhaps fourteen,<sup>1</sup> of them are preserved to us, out of probably a considerably larger number. Sufficient are those which we have, under God's providence, for the guidance of Christ's Church in matters of doctrine, discipline, and practice.

<sup>1</sup> The doubtful exception being the Epistle to the Hebrews.







It is proposed to give, in this chapter, a brief account of the thirteen undoubted Epistles of St. Paul, reserving the Epistle to the Hebrews for a separate chapter.

### **The Epistle to the Romans.**

**Place and Time of Writing.** In chapter xvi. 1, St. Paul commends Phœbe of Cenchreæ, the eastern port of Corinth, to the good offices of the Christians at Rome. In ver. 23, he dates his letter from the house of Gaius, who is mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14, as one of those whom St. Paul had himself baptized. Erastus, the "chamberlain of the city," mentioned in the same verse, is, with little doubt, the Erastus of Acts xix. 22, and 2 Tim. iv. 20.

Again in chapter xv. 25-31, St. Paul says that he was about to visit Jerusalem, carrying with him the contributions of the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the poor Christians of the mother Church. He expresses the hope that after having performed this service, he may be able to visit Rome on his way to Spain. He is fully aware (vv. 30, 31), of the dangers to which he will be exposed at Jerusalem, and desires the prayers of the Roman Christians on his behalf.

From Acts xix. 21 we find St. Paul, when at Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, expressing his determination, after a visit to Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, and subsequently to visit Rome. The visit to Macedonia and Achaia was accomplished,<sup>1</sup> and after a three months' stay in the latter country,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 1, 2.



the Apostle started for Jerusalem by way of Macedonia. He carried with him the alms before mentioned, for "the poor saints at Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> On his way, he spent the Passover at Philippi, and arrived at Jerusalem in time for Pentecost. This was in the spring of A.D. 58.

From chapter i. 10, 11, 13, it is evident that St. Paul had not yet seen Rome. But he longed to do so. Rome, he felt, was within his province as the Apostle to the Gentiles. This eager desire to visit the capital of the empire was probably aroused by St. Paul's intercourse with Aquila and Priscilla, on his second missionary journey.<sup>2</sup> The desire, once awakened, gained strength. But it met with many obstacles,<sup>3</sup> and was still ungratified when the Epistle was written, although kept steadily in view.<sup>4</sup>

All these considerations indirectly point to Corinth and the spring of A.D. 58, as the place and time of the Epistle.

**The Persons addressed.** It is clear from xv. 20, that no Apostle had as yet visited Rome. The Gospel had doubtless been carried there by those "strangers of Rome," who had been converted on the Day of Pentecost. Two of them, Andronicus and Junia, are, it would seem, specially mentioned.<sup>5</sup> These Roman Christians had not, as yet, been formed into an organized Church. They still met in the private house of Aquila and Priscilla.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly St. Paul does not address them, as he does the Corinthians and Galatians, as a Church. His proposed visit would enable him to constitute them as such, and to ordain elders for them. This may have been part of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 2, 18-21; cf. Acts xix. 1, 10; 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. i. 13.    <sup>4</sup> Acts xix. 21.    <sup>5</sup> Rom. xvi. 7.    <sup>6</sup> Rom. xvi. 4, 5.



spiritual gift which he longed to impart to them, that they might "be established."<sup>1</sup>

These Christians were, apparently, mainly Gentiles,<sup>2</sup> and yet St. Paul assumes their acquaintance with the Law of Moses. Both these conditions will be met if we suppose them to have been gathered chiefly from among the Gentile converts to Judaism, of whom there were large numbers at Rome.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Introduction. i. 1-15.
- II. Theme of the Epistle stated; the Gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation." i. 16, 17.  
All have need of this "power," both Gentiles (i. 19-32) and Jews (ii. 1-iii. 20). It is a power because it places men, by faith in it, in a right relation to God, so that they are accounted "righteous." i. 18-iii. 20.  
God's grace freely offers this power of being righteous to the acceptance of all men through faith. Abraham is an instance of this acceptance. iii. 21-iv. 25.  
The "power" of the Gospel is shown in that the work of Christ
  - (a) Reversed the Fall. v.
  - (b) Redeemed men from sin, and its wages death. vi.
  - (c) Redeemed men from the bondage of law. vii.
  - (d) Results in the sanctification of the whole man, in part now in this life, wholly in the life to come. viii.
- III. The doctrine thus laid down is reconciled with the unbelief, for the present, of Israel as a nation, great grief as it is to the Apostle. ix.-xi.
- IV. Duties incumbent upon all who accept the doctrine, both general, and special, in the case of weak brethren. xii.-xv. 13.
- V. Conclusion: Matters personal to the Apostle, and salutations. xv. 14-xvi. 27.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 13, xi. 13.



## First Epistle to the Corinthians.

**Place and Time of Writing.** Evidently Ephesus, towards the close of St. Paul's three years sojourn at that city, not long before Pentecost, A.D. 57.<sup>1</sup>

**Occasion.** The Apostle's sojourn at Ephesus closed amid storm and tumult. He was in danger of his very life.<sup>2</sup> The troubles culminated probably in the outbreak under Demetrius, which occurred subsequently to the writing of this Epistle.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, in the midst of these troubles, news came of sad divisions and rampant party-spirit at Corinth.<sup>4</sup> There was also a terrible case of immorality.<sup>5</sup> After this sad news, a letter came from the Corinthian Church, asking for advice about (1) marriage,<sup>6</sup> (2) sacrificial feasts,<sup>7</sup> and (3) the exercise of spiritual gifts in public.<sup>8</sup> These matters furnished the occasion for the Epistle.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Introduction. i. 1-9.
- II. Reproof of the Corinthian Church for their party-spirit, of which the *cause* was spiritual pride (i. 17-31); the *remedy*, reception of the heavenly wisdom (ii.). Party-spirit had arisen from wrong ideas as to the Christian ministry (iii. 1-iv. 5), illustrated by the cases of Apollos and himself (iv. 6-21). i. 10-iv. 21.
- III. The case of immorality to be dealt with by excommunication. v.
- IV. Recourse not to be had to the heathen courts of law. vi. 1-11.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 8. Cf. Acts xix. 22, xx. 31.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 9-14, xv. 30-32.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. i. 8.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. i. 11, 12.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. v.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. vii.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. viii.-x.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. xi.-xiv.



- V. Necessity of chastity, grounded on the fact that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. vi. 12-20.
- VI. Reply to question about marriage. vii.
- VII. Reply to question about sacrificial feasts ; rules for social intercourse ; need of caution for our brethren's sake. viii.-x.
- VIII. Reply to question about the exercise of spiritual gifts in public ; directions given about public worship, especially with regard to the Holy Communion. xi.-xiv.
- IX. Concerning the Doctrine of the Resurrection ; an answer to some of the free-thinkers amongst the Corinthian Christians. xv.
- X. Conclusion : directions and salutations. xvi.

## Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

### Place, Time, and Occasion of Writing.

1. A passage in the first Epistle<sup>1</sup> makes it clear that St. Paul had already written a previous letter to the Corinthians. This letter has not survived.

2. In the second Epistle mention is made<sup>2</sup> of a second visit to Corinth, which is not mentioned in the Acts. This probably was a short visit paid during the three years' residence at Ephesus, the Apostle going and returning across the Ægean Sea. There are indications in the second Epistle that this visit was one of sorrow and humiliation. Having gone with a purpose of correcting abuses, he had been badly received, and had, owing it may be to prostration from sickness, failed to make that impression which he had intended.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. v. 9. Cf. 2 Cor. x. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1. Cf. ii. 1, xii. 21. The visit of Acts xx. 2 was therefore the third visit.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 1, x. 10, xii. 20, 21, xiii. 2, 10. Cf. 2 Cor. xii. 7 ; Gal. iv. 13, 14.



So painful a visit had that been, that he did not intend, apparently, to go again, unless he should hear encouraging news.

3. When St. Paul was at Ephesus, on his third great journey, he despatched Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia.<sup>1</sup> The journey of Timothy was, it would seem, extended to Corinth.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the first Epistle was written, and despatched by some other hand across the sea to Corinth. Timothy would reach that city soon after the receipt of the first Epistle, and would, on his return, bring back word to the Apostle as to its reception. This he had done before the second Epistle was written,<sup>3</sup> and his report was an unfavourable one. The discipline he had enjoined they would not administer.

4. Timothy had returned to Ephesus before the Apostle left it. The result seems to have been that Titus was now despatched to Corinth across the sea with injunctions to return through Macedonia, and so to meet St. Paul. It was hoped that they might meet at Troas.<sup>4</sup> Titus, it is thought, carried with him as his credentials, an Epistle which has been lost, and which contained very sharp rebukes. To this Epistle allusion is made, it is supposed, in our second Epistle.<sup>5</sup> Titus not meeting St. Paul at Troas, the latter was so troubled in spirit that he was obliged to forego a great opportunity of preaching the Gospel at Troas,<sup>6</sup> and to hurry on to Macedonia. There, in one of its towns, Titus at last came to him. The report he brought was

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 1-4. The expressions in 2 Cor. vii. 6-16 point to an effect upon the Corinthian Church which our first Epistle was scarcely calculated to produce. See especially ver. 11.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 12.



very favourable. Although the stern discipline he had enjoined had not been carried out in its integrity, yet enough had been done<sup>1</sup> to ensure reformation, and St. Paul was "comforted" and "rejoiced."<sup>2</sup>

5. To assure the Corinthian Church of his joy, the Apostle wrote our second Epistle, from Philippi probably, and despatched it by the hands of Titus and "two other trusted brethren."<sup>3</sup> In addition to his report upon the question of excommunication, Titus had also told St. Paul that Judaizing teachers were still undermining his authority, and that the collection for the Jerusalem poor was behindhand. Each of these matters is referred to in the Epistle.

6. From these considerations we may construct the following narrative. Whilst at Ephesus, probably before he had been there very long, St. Paul, hearing of a sad case of immorality at Corinth, paid a short visit to that city, in the hope of correcting it. Feeling on his return that he had failed, he wrote a letter on the subject, which has perished. The letter had no effect, for after a while some of the members of the family of Chloe brought him word from Corinth that not only was the offender still allowed free intercourse in Christian worship, but that his own authority was being undermined by party-spirit, and that the Gospel of Christ was in danger. Hereupon he wrote a second letter, which is our first Epistle, in the spring of A.D. 57. The effect of this was reported to him by Timothy, who had gone to Corinth soon after the arrival of that letter. The report was so unfavourable, that Titus was now despatched, with whom, as is supposed, St. Paul sent a third letter, which has perished. Upon Titus joining him again, in the autumn, at Philippi

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 17-24.



probably, our second Epistle, in reality the fourth, was written at once, about October, 57, and it was followed soon afterwards by the Apostle's own arrival at Corinth.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Thankfulness for Titus's report (i.-vii.), including—
  - (a) Directions as to the Offender. ii. 3-11.
  - (b) Digression on the Christian Ministry. iii. 5-vi. 10.
- II. Concerning the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. viii., ix.
- III. Vindication of himself as against false teachers. x.-xiii. 10.
- IV. Conclusion : xiii. 11-14.

### Epistle to the Galatians.

#### Place and Time of Writing.

1. There is no direct intimation of the date of this Epistle, as in the case of those to the Romans and Corinthians.

2. There are many similarities of expression between this Epistle and that to the Romans. We may compare the references in each to Abraham,<sup>1</sup> and the use of the word "Abba."<sup>2</sup> We may note also the use of Old Testament quotations,<sup>3</sup> and generally the similarity in the trains of thought.<sup>4</sup>

3. There are personal and local notices in this Epistle which connect it with the second Epistle to Corinthians. The same infirmity of body is mentioned in each,<sup>5</sup> and he writes in the same way in each of

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 14, 16, 29 ; Rom. iv. 13, 14, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iv. 6, 7 ; Rom. viii. 14-17.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 11, 12 ; Rom. i. 17, x. 5.

<sup>4</sup> See especially Gal. iii. 22 ; Rom. xi. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. iv. 13, 14 ; 2 Cor. xii. 7.



his "presence" and "absence."<sup>1</sup> It is only in these two Epistles that Titus is mentioned in a marked and prominent way,<sup>2</sup> and in these two alone that the thought of his early days as a Christian is present in St. Paul's mind.<sup>3</sup>

4. The Apostle, when writing the Epistle, had already visited Galatia twice, for he speaks of how he preached the Gospel "at the first."<sup>4</sup>

From these considerations we may gather that the Epistle was written during St. Paul's third missionary journey, whilst the circumstances of the second Epistle to the Corinthians were quite fresh in his mind, and probably when he was already either contemplating or writing the Epistle to the Romans. We shall not, therefore, greatly err if we date the Epistle from Philippi in the late autumn of A.D. 57, or from Corinth, in the winter of 57-58.

**Purpose.** The Galatian Christians, after St. Paul's departure from them, had been exposed to the erroneous teaching of certain Judaizing Christians from Judæa. These men had endeavoured to undermine St. Paul's authority as an Apostle, and had insisted upon the necessity of the observance of the Mosaic law for all Christians. The Galatians had been carried away by these teachers. To bring them back to their allegiance, so to speak, to himself, as the Apostle of Christ, and to re-state, in opposition to the false teachers, the doctrine of Justification by Faith, is St. Paul's purpose in this Epistle.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 18, 20; 2 Cor. x. 1-11, xiii. 10.

Gal. ii. 1-3; 2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 6, 7, viii. 16-23, xii. 18.

Gal. i. 17, iv. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 32. Aretas was king of Petra, in Arabia.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iv. 13.



**Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Introductory. i. 1-5.
- II. Indignant protest (*a*) against false teaching (i. 6-10), and (*b*) against the traducers of his own apostolic authority, with vindication of the same (i. 11-ii. 21).
- III. Statement of doctrine : specially of justification, or pardon, through faith in Christ ; they were called to freedom, not bondage. iii., iv.
- IV. Exhortations to steadfastness in Christian freedom (v. 1-26), to forbearance towards one another (vi. 1-5), and liberality (vi. 6-10).
- V. Conclusion, written with his own hand. vi. 11-18.

**Epistle to the Ephesians.**

**Place and Time of Writing.** It was not until he was hastening to Jerusalem for one of the great festivals, at the close of his second missionary journey, that St. Paul visited Ephesus for the first time. His stay there was a very brief one—perhaps of only one day. But he promised, God willing, to return to the city again.<sup>1</sup>

This promise St. Paul was able to fulfil on his third journey. He then made Ephesus his head-quarters for three years, visiting the country around, and probably even making a short visit to Corinth.<sup>2</sup> The result was that “not alone in Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia,” much people, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of God, and embraced the faith of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Once more, though he did not visit Ephesus again,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xviii. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 1. xx. 31 ; 1 Cor. v. 9. See pages 575, 577.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xix, 10, 26. The “Asia” intended was the western part of what we know as Asia Minor.



St. Paul had an opportunity of seeing the elders of the Ephesian Church, and of giving them a last word of earnest warning and exhortation, when his ship made a halt at Miletus on the voyage to Jerusalem, which brought the Apostle's third great journey to an end.<sup>1</sup>

From Jerusalem, as we know, St. Paul was sent as a prisoner—first to Cæsarea and then to Rome. It was from that city, towards the close probably of his two years' captivity, that this Epistle was written.<sup>2</sup> He was then "the prisoner of the Lord," in bonds.<sup>3</sup> Three other of his Epistles were written about the same time, those to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon. The two latter, with this one to the Ephesians, were forwarded to their destinations by the hands of Tychicus and Onesimus.<sup>4</sup> The date of the four Epistles would be A.D. 62.

**Persons addressed.** This Epistle is now generally considered to have been intended not for the Ephesians alone, but for the whole group of churches, of which Ephesus, as the capital of the province, was the centre. The great subject of the Epistle is the unity of the Church, and the duty of maintaining it. Such a subject was especially fitted for an encyclical, or circular, letter, addressed to the Christians of many places.

In the two most ancient manuscripts the words "at Ephesus," of chap. i. 1, are omitted. In all others they occur. Hence it is thought, with much probability,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 17-38.

<sup>2</sup> Some have thought that the captivity was that of Cæsarea (Acts xxiv. 27), but this cannot be, for see Phil. i. 13, iv. 22; Philem. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1, vi. 20; Phil. i. 7, 13, 14, 16; Col. iv. 3, 18; Philem. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7, 9; Philem. 10, 12.



that several copies of the Epistle were made, in one of which only the words "at Ephesus" were inserted, whilst in the others the names of those places to which he delivered them were to be inserted by Tychicus. Thus one copy would be delivered at Laodicæa, and addressed "To the saints which are at Laodicæa." This supposition at once explains the directions in Col. iv. 16. Whilst the special letter addressed to themselves was to be read also at Laodicæa, the Colossian Christians were at the same time to share in the instruction and exhortation of the general letter to all the churches of the district.

One other very important point should be noticed. In his earlier Epistles, St. Paul speaks of the churches. Here, in this Epistle to the Ephesians, written from Rome, the then centre of civilization and power, the Apostle writes emphatically of "The Church." The threatening danger of disintegration, to which the troubles at Corinth and elsewhere had drawn his thoughts, brought home to the Apostle, we may well believe, the need of the Lord's far-seeing prayer for the unity of His Church.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Salutation. i. 1, 2.  
 "The dispensation of the fulness of times" is "the gathering together in one all things in Christ," in other words, "the unity and Catholicity of the Church." i. 3-14.  
 Prayer that his readers may understand this. i. 15-23.
- II. The privileges of Church membership :
  - (a) Grace offered to all. ii. 1-10.
  - (b) Access to God for all, Jew and Gentile. ii. 11-22.
- III. The mystery that the Gentiles should be admitted to



the Church was a special revelation made to the Apostle by God. iii. 1-12.

Prayer that they may rise to the greatness and blessedness of their calling. iii. 13-21.

IV. Exhortation to strive after unity, and that by the exercise of Christian graces. iv.

V. Exhortation to a life of morality and piety, as the children of light. v. 1-21.

VI. Home duties enforced. v. 22-vi. 9.

VII. How to meet the difficulties of the Christian life : our warfare is with the Evil One, for which we need "the armour of God." vi. 10-20.

VIII. Conclusion. vi. 21-24.

### **Epistle to the Philippians.**

#### **Place, Time and Occasion of Writing.**

In A.D. 52, when on his second missionary journey, St. Paul commenced his European ministry at Philippi. There were not many Jews there, so that the members of the Church founded there by the Apostle were mainly Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> They were distinguished for their affection for St. Paul, and kindly care of him.<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle visited the city again on his way to Corinth during his third journey, and spent Easter there on his return, when on his way to Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

When the Philippian Christians heard of the troubles which had fallen upon St. Paul, and his imprisonment at Rome, they sent Epaphroditus to "minister to his wants." Epaphroditus fell sick at Rome, so that he nearly died.<sup>4</sup> On his recovery and return to Philippi, the Apostle took the opportunity to

<sup>1</sup> There are no direct quotations in the Epistle from the Old Testament, with which they would have little or no acquaintance.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 25, iv. 10, 14, 15 ; 2 Cor. xi. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xx, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. ii. 25-30.



write this Epistle. It was written, therefore, from Rome, about A.D. 62.

We cannot certainly tell whether this Epistle was written before or after the group of three to Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> We may, however, note that the contrast between the law and faith, so strongly seen in his earlier Epistles, was still occupying some of St. Paul's thoughts.<sup>2</sup> This was due probably to some tidings brought by Epaphroditus.

On the other hand, we may trace the effect of his residence in the Roman capital on the Apostle's mind. The Philippians had the privileges of Roman citizenship, and so he reminds them of their true citizenship.<sup>3</sup> He incidentally, but clearly, hints at the necessity for unity.<sup>4</sup>

Of all his Epistles, this one perhaps abounds more than the others in expressions of tenderness and affection, such as we might expect in a letter written out of a full, grateful heart, longing to make some spiritual return for kindly and sympathetic ministrations to bodily needs.

### Analysis of the Epistle:

- I. Introductory greeting and prayer. i. 1-11.
- II. Progress at Rome ; hopes about himself. i. 12-26.
- III. Exhortations to self-denial, founded upon the example of Jesus Christ. ii. 27-iii. 18.
- IV. Personal matters ; Timothy ; Epaphroditus. ii. 19-30.
- V. Conclusion begun, but broken off (iii. 1) by :
- VI. (a) Warnings against Judaizing. iii. 2-16.
- (b) Warnings against lawlessness. iii. 17-21. Both warnings enforced by his own example.
- VII. Conclusion resumed. iv. 1.

<sup>1</sup> The Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon:

<sup>2</sup> See chap. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 20. Cf. i. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. i. 18, 27, ii. 12, 14, iii. 15, 16, iv. 2.



Mediation in the matter of some local quarrels. iv. 2, 3.

Exhortation to prayer. iv. 4-9.

Grateful acknowledgment of all their kindness. iv. 10-19.

Last messages. Benediction. iv. 20-23.

### **Epistle to the Colossians.**

**Place and Time of Writing.** One consequence of St. Paul's lengthened sojourn at Ephesus, from A.D. 54 to A.D. 57, was that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus."<sup>1</sup> Visitors to Ephesus listened to the Apostle's teaching, and carried back the news of it to their own cities. Thus churches were founded in cities which were never visited by St. Paul. That at Colossæ was one of these,<sup>2</sup> as were also its sister churches of Laodicæa and Hierapolis. One of the Colossian Christians was Epaphras, an earnest labourer on behalf of the Gospel in all three cities.<sup>3</sup> To him, perhaps, they owed their Christianity. Epaphras made a journey to Rome, during the time of St. Paul's imprisonment there, and gave him news of the state of the Colossian Church. It was not altogether satisfactory. The Christians there were falling under the influence of erroneous teaching. To refute this, and to warn them against it, was the object of the Apostle in writing this letter. It was written from Rome, in A.D. 62 or 63.

**Purpose.** The teaching against which St. Paul was so anxious to put the Colossians on their guard was a mixture of degenerate philosophy and Judaism. On the one hand, the Judaizers wanted to engraft the strict

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Col. iv. 13.



observance of the Mosaic law upon Christianity ;<sup>1</sup> and on the other hand, the Gnostics,<sup>2</sup> as the philosophers were called, taught that angels and other beings, intermediate between God and man, ought to be worshipped ;<sup>3</sup> and some of them inculcated asceticism,<sup>4</sup> whilst others permitted all manner of licence.<sup>5</sup> The faith of the Colossians was being undermined by this strange teaching. To counteract its pernicious effects was St. Paul's purpose in writing the Epistle. In it the Apostle takes occasion to set forth the true doctrine as to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. This alone makes the Epistle a very precious one for the Church in all ages.

### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Introduction. i. 1-14.
- II. The true doctrine about the Person and office of Jesus Christ set forth. i. 15-ii. 3.
- III. Warnings against error. ii. 4-iii. 4.
- IV. Exhortations to holiness and purity of life, with special precepts for husbands, wives, children, masters, and servants. iii. 5-iv. 6.
- V. Personal matters : Conclusion. iv. 7-18.

### **First Epistle to the Thessalonians.**

**Place and Time of Writing.** Corinth, A.D. 52.

**Occasion.** When, on his second missionary journey, in the year 52, St. Paul was "shamefully entreated"<sup>6</sup> at Philippi, and compelled to leave that city, he and Silas, travelling by the great high road, called the Via Egnatiana, made their way, through

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 16-23.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 8, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Col. iii. 5-8.

<sup>4</sup> From a Greek word "gnosis" = knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> Col. ii. 23.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 2.



Amphipolis and Apollonia, to the important sea-port town of Thessalonica, then, as now, a centre of much trade and commerce. Here they planted a Christian Church. This Church mainly consisted of Gentiles, for though the Jews were numerous at Thessalonica, and had a synagogue there, the majority of them, as usual, refused to receive the witness of St. Paul to Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The Gentiles at Thessalonica appear to have received the Gospel with marked enthusiasm, "turning from their idols to serve the living and true God," and becoming ensamples to a wide circle of Christian Churches.<sup>2</sup>

St. Paul stayed long enough at Thessalonica to organize a Church,<sup>3</sup> and a settled ministry;<sup>4</sup> and to lay down rules perhaps for public worship.<sup>5</sup> There was time also for the Philippians, at a distance of eighty miles, to send "once and again unto his necessity."<sup>6</sup> His sojourn, however, though probably longer than the three weeks indicated in the Acts,<sup>7</sup> could not have been very protracted. He was compelled, by the virulent opposition of the Jews, to retire first to Beræa, and then to Athens. His anxiety to hear about his Thessalonian converts was so great, and he was so entirely prevented from revisiting them himself,<sup>8</sup> that he did not permit Silas and Timotheus to accompany him from Beræa.<sup>9</sup> He preferred to be left at Athens alone, whilst Timotheus was sent back to Thessalonica, and Silas waited for him at Beræa<sup>10</sup> Together, they

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. i. 7, 9.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thess. v. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Phil. iv. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Acts xvii. 2. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 9. Most likely, St. Paul devoted the first three weeks entirely to preaching to the Jews, and then, for the remainder of his visit, he worked at his trade, and preached to the Gentiles.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Acts xvii. 14.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 2, 5.



returned to the Apostle, who by this time had reached Corinth.<sup>1</sup> The news which Timothy brought of the faith and steadfastness of the Thessalonians filled the Apostle's loving and anxious heart with joy.<sup>2</sup> To assure them of his joy, and of his continued love and sympathy for them, St. Paul wrote this Epistle, coupling with his own name those of Silas and Timotheus.<sup>3</sup> It is the earliest of his Epistles.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Salutation, with specially joyful remembrance of their faith. i. 1-10.
- II. Reminiscences of his own work among them. ii. 1-12.
- III. Their trials and sufferings similar to those of the Judæan Christians. ii. 13-20.
- IV. His anxiety for them, shown by the mission of Timothy. iii. 1-13.
- V. Exhortation to purity. iv. 1-12.
- VI. Concerning the Second Advent. iv. 13-v. 11.
- VII. Conclusion. v. 12-28.

## Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

**Place and Time of Writing.** Corinth, A.D. 53.

**Occasion.** From the accusation brought by the unbelieving Jews against St. Paul, it would seem that he had laid special stress, in his preaching at Thessalonica, upon Jesus as a King, and of the coming of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 6; Acts xviii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> Some think that Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy joined St. Paul at Athens almost immediately. That then he sent Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2), and later on Silas also (1 Thess. iii. 5), and that both rejoined him at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5). But the more simple explanation given above is to be preferred; besides, 1 Thess. iii. 1 and iii. 5 refer surely to the same time, and the same sending.



His Kingdom. The Christians eagerly expected it, and their hopes concerning it, form the main subject of the two Epistles which St. Paul wrote to them.<sup>1</sup>

The first Epistle was written from Corinth, in the earlier part of St. Paul's eighteen months' residence there. It answered some anxious questions of the Thessalonian brethren about their departed friends, and the Second Advent of the Lord. The Apostle's words were misunderstood by the Thessalonians, and tidings of their mistake were brought to Corinth. Their minds had also been greatly disturbed by some fanatical members of their body, who asserted that the Day of the Lord had already come, and who, to enforce their views, had circulated a forged Epistle, as if it had come from St. Paul. To correct these matters, St. Paul wrote his second Epistle.<sup>2</sup>

It is beyond our purpose to enter upon any commentary of the Epistle itself, but we may say briefly about St. Paul's prophecy respecting the Man of Sin, or Antichrist,<sup>3</sup> which has been so differently interpreted by commentators, that it was destined surely, as so many of the Old Testament prophecies, "to receive *many unfolding fulfilments*, beginning in the apostolic age, and running on to the end of time, when we may expect some culminating fulfilment."

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Salutation. Comfort in the thought of the Second Advent. i. 1-12.
- II. Some misapprehensions respecting the Second Advent corrected :
  - (a) The misapprehension stated. ii. 1-2.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 7 ; 1 Thess. i. 10, iv. 13-v. 11 ; 2 Thess. ii.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thess. i. 7-ii. 12 ;

<sup>3</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 7-9.



(b) A great apostacy would take place before the Second Advent; for the present it was restrained.

ii. 3-12.

(c) Meanwhile we must stand fast in the faith. ii. 13-17.

III. St. Paul asks their prayers, and prays for them. iii. 1-5.

IV. Discipline to be enforced, with kindness. iii. 6-15.

V. Conclusion. iii. 16-18.

## The Pastoral Epistles.

The two Epistles to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus are called "The Pastoral Epistles," because, as addressed to two of the chief Pastors of the Apostolic Church, they treat mainly of the Pastoral, or Ministerial, office. They were all written towards the close of St. Paul's life, and contain, we may say, the results of the Apostle's matured thoughts upon the very important points of Church order and government. They are of special interest, too, as showing the extreme anxiety of St. Paul for his two trusted followers, Timothy and Titus, that they should know how to "behave themselves in the Church of God,"<sup>1</sup> and be able to maintain in themselves, and to hand on to others that high standard of life and work, by which he himself had ever ruled his own conduct. Moreover, he was especially desirous that both they and their successors should "speak the things which concern sound doctrine," "holding fast the faithful word, as they had been taught."<sup>2</sup>

These three Epistles throw much light upon the organization of the early Church. In them, we find :

1. Three orders of the Ministry : (a) Persons, such

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. i. 13; Titus i. 9, ii. 1. Cf. 1 Tim. i. 10, vi. 3.



as Timothy and Titus, who, as special representatives of the Apostles, belonged to the highest order, and may be called Vicars-Apostolic. One of their special functions was to ordain elders; (*b*) Bishops, Presbyters or Elders,<sup>1</sup> and (*c*) Deacons.

2. Two orders of Female Ministry, very necessary in an Eastern state of society: (*a*) Widows, (*b*) Deaconesses.

3. Very careful and anxious directions in regard to the ordination of Ministers, by the laying on of hands.<sup>2</sup>

4. Directions about public worship.

**Place and Time of Writing.** The testimony of the very early Church to two Roman imprisonments of St. Paul may be said to be universal. The first of these is the one recorded by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. It terminated in A.D. 63. After his release, the Apostle carried out, as is most likely, his long-fixed intention of visiting Spain.<sup>3</sup> Returning thence, he seems to have re-visited the Asiatic Churches, which he had founded, and in the course of a long journey to have visited Crete, an island at which his vessel had touched on his voyage, as a prisoner, to Rome. Here, at Crete, St. Paul preached the Gospel, leaving Titus behind him, to consolidate the work which he had himself begun.<sup>4</sup> He expresses

<sup>1</sup> These terms, or names, are synonymous in the New Testament. In the next generation to the Apostles, the name of Bishop (or overseer) was restricted to the highest order of the ministry, to men like Timothy and Titus. Thus in the apostolic age we have—(1) Apostles and Vicars-Apostolic; (2) Bishops Presbyters or Elders; (3) Deacons; and in the next and succeeding ages, we have—(1) Bishops; (2) Presbyters, which word we generally use now under the contracted form of "priests"; (3) Deacons.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xv. 24. Clement of Rome, writing in the same century, speaks of St. Paul having reached "the boundary of the West," by which he is generally understood to mean the Western parts of Spain.

<sup>4</sup> Titus i. 5.



to Titus his determination to winter at Nicopolis, a city of Epirus, on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, founded by Augustus to commemorate the battle of Actium.

Meanwhile, after leaving Crete, St. Paul, at what exact interval we cannot tell, visited Miletus, Ephesus, Troas, and Corinth. He was accompanied, as on his earlier journeys, by several friends and fellow-labourers. Of these, he had selected, as we have seen, Titus to superintend the affairs of the Christian Church in Crete ;<sup>1</sup> Trophimus he was obliged to leave sick at Miletus ;<sup>2</sup> Timothy he left in charge of the Church at Ephesus,<sup>3</sup> and Erastus stayed at Corinth.<sup>4</sup> The departure from Troas for Corinth seems to have been hurried, for at Troas St. Paul left behind him certain articles, which he desires Timothy, in his second Epistle, to bring with him to Rome.

From Corinth, as we may suppose, St. Paul went on to Nicopolis. There probably he was arrested, and carried prisoner to Rome, A.D. 67 or 68.

It is clear from Titus iii. 12, that that Epistle was written before the Apostle reached Nicopolis. We may date it therefore from Corinth, in the year A.D. 67.

In 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, the Apostle expresses his hope that he may be able shortly to rejoin Timothy at Ephesus. But he has misgivings : he may tarry long. Perhaps he already saw difficulties closing in around him, and his second imprisonment in sight. We may

<sup>1</sup> Titus did not stay long in Crete. He probably rejoined St. Paul at Nicopolis, and was thence sent into Dalmatia (Tit. iii. 12 ; 2 Tim. iv. 10), unless perhaps he first accompanied St. Paul from Nicopolis to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 20. Trophimus was the innocent cause of St. Paul's troubles at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 29).

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3. When St. Paul was at Ephesus on his third journey, he sent Timothy before him into Macedonia (Acts xix. 22).

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 20.



therefore date the first Epistle to Timothy from Nicopolis, not long after the Epistle to Titus, in A.D. 67.

It is quite clear that the second Epistle to Timothy was written in the immediate prospect of death, and therefore at the close almost of St. Paul's second imprisonment and life.<sup>1</sup> With what eagerness does he long for a sight of Timothy before he dies.<sup>2</sup> From Rome therefore it was written in A.D. 68.

### **First Epistle to Timothy: Analysis.**

- I. Salutation. Solemn charge to Timothy. i. 1-20.
- II. Rules for Public Worship. ii. 1-15.
- III. Rules for Ordination. iii. 1-15.
- IV. Rules for the guidance of Timothy's life as a minister. iii. 16-iv. 16.
- V. Rules for the better ordering of the Church, with reference to sex, age, ability, and station. v. 1-vi. 10.
- VI. Renewed charge to Timothy. Farewell. vi. 11-21.

### **Second Epistle to Timothy: Analysis.**

- I. Encouragement to Timothy, surrounded by difficulties, and in consequent despondency. St. Paul especially urges his own endurance of suffering, and the hopes by which he was sustained. i. 1-ii. 13.
- II. Special directions as to Timothy's behaviour, with the general principles upon which it should be grounded. ii. 14-26.
- III. Warnings as to coming troublous times for the Church. All the more need for Timothy to "make full proof of his ministry." iii. 1-iv. 5.
- IV. Personal matters. Farewell. iv. 6-22.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 16-18. Cf. i. 12, 16, 17, ii. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. i. 4, iv. 9, 21.



**Epistle to Titus: Analysis.**

- I. Salutation. i. 1-4.
- II. Purpose for which Titus had been left in Crete. i. 5-16.
- III. Directions for the guidance of Titus in his dealings with various classes of persons, and in the exercise of discipline. ii. 1-iii. 8.
- IV. Special instructions. Farewell. iii. 9-15.

**Epistle to Philemon.**

**Place and Time of Writing.** Rome, A.D. 63. The letter was sent with those to the Ephesians and Colossians.

**Occasion.** Onesimus, the slave of a Colossian gentleman named Philemon, had run away from his master, and had found his way to Rome. There he had fallen in with, and been converted by St. Paul, during his first imprisonment. It is most likely that the Apostle represented to Onesimus that his first duty was to return to his master. To encourage him, he furnished him with a letter to his master, which we know as the Epistle to Philemon. It is a model of the graceful, courteous, Christian letter. It is the only *private* letter of the Apostle which has come down to us, though doubtless, he wrote many.

**Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Salutation to Philemon, his family, and his household. Verses 1-7.
- II. Intercession for Onesimus. 8-21.
- III. Hopes of a personal interview. Farewell. 22-24.



## CHAPTER LXVI.

### Epistle to the Hebrews.

**AUTHORSHIP.** The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not mention his own name, and although the Epistle is styled in our English versions, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," yet the proper title, as in the oldest manuscripts, is undoubtedly, "To the Hebrews."

The opinion of the great Greek Father, Origen, in the middle of the third century, was that "the thoughts are St. Paul's, but the language and composition those of some one writing under his instruction and direction." This is all, probably, that can be said with any certainty as to the authorship. The writer was evidently a Jew, for he writes entirely from a Jewish standpoint, and makes no reference at all to the Gentiles.

The following considerations may be urged in favour of St. Paul as the author :—

1. The earliest traditions, though not positively affirming it, yet assign the authorship to St. Paul.
2. There are no less than fifty-one words found in this Epistle, which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, *except* in St. Paul's Epistles. Of these fifty-one, seventeen are not even found in the



LXX.<sup>1</sup> There are also in this Epistle thirteen or fourteen words, which are frequent in St. Paul's Epistles, but seldom occur anywhere else in the New Testament, and there are a great many expressions which recall St. Paul's Epistles.<sup>2</sup>

3. The quotations from the Old Testament, in this Epistle, are mainly of passages illustrating and proving the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and many of them are used with a like purpose in St. Paul's Epistles, and in the same kind of connection.<sup>3</sup>

4. Timothy was evidently well known to the writer, and is alluded to in the same affectionate way as is customary with St. Paul.<sup>4</sup>

5. The concluding benediction is entirely in St. Paul's manner.<sup>5</sup> It is not found in any other of the New Testament Epistles, except his.

On the other hand, against St. Paul's authorship, we note that :—

1. The opening of the Epistle is entirely unlike the way in which St. Paul commences the thirteen Epistles known to be his.

2. From chapter ii. 3, the writer would seem not to have been an Apostle, for he classes himself with those who had received the Gospel from the Apostles. St.

<sup>1</sup> Of these, we may note especially : "*as good as dead*," Heb. xi. 12 ; Rom. iv. 19 ; "*full assurance*," Heb. vi. 10-12, x. 22-24 ; Col. ii. 2-5 ; 1 Thess. i. 3-5. In each of these four passages we have St. Paul's triad of graces, "faith, hope, and love ;" "*bondage*," Heb. ii. 15 ; Rom. viii. 15 ; Gal. iv. 24, v. 1 ; "*transgression*," Heb. ii. 2, ix. 15 ; Gal. iii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. for instance : Heb. ii. 14 and Col. i. 22 ; Heb. ii. 17, v. 1 and Rom. xv. 17 ; Heb. iii. 1 and 1 Thess. v. 27 ; Heb. x. 1 and Col. ii. 17 ; Heb. x. 5 and Rom. v. 12 ; Heb. xiii. 21 and 2 Cor. ix. 8, etc. ; and many more.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *e.g.* Heb. i. 5, v. 5 with Acts xiii. 33 ; Rom. i. 4 and Col. i. 18 ; Heb. vi. 13 with Gal. iii. 8-29 ; Heb. x. 30 with Rom. xii. 19, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Heb. xiii. 23 ; 2 Cor. i. 1 ; Col. i. 1 ; Philem. i.

<sup>5</sup> The allusion to "bonds" in chap. x. 34 irresistibly, too, reminds us of St. Paul.



Paul, as we remember, most distinctly states that he received the Gospel directly from the Lord himself.<sup>1</sup>

3. If the imprisonment of Timothy, alluded to in chapter xiii. 23, happened during the Neronian persecution of A.D. 64–68, St. Paul himself must have been in expectation of death, and could scarcely have been planning the journey mentioned in the same passage.

4. The difference in style between this Epistle and the undoubted ones of St. Paul is marked. Its well-balanced sentences, and close reasoning offer a strong contrast to the impetuous, rugged, unfinished style of those other Epistles.

On the whole, we must be content to allow the question of authorship to remain in doubt. But whilst we cannot say with Luther that Apollos was the writer, nor yet insist on the Pauline authorship, we may certainly conclude that the composition of the Epistle must at least be ascribed to one of the Apostle's closest followers, who had drunk deeply of his spirit, and caught the flame of his enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup>

**Place and Time of Writing.** The only allusion to *place* is in the words "They of Italy salute you."<sup>3</sup> This may simply mean "the Italians," who were with the writer at the time, and so would furnish no clue to the locality from which the Epistle was written. But the phrase certainly suggests to us

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> The theory of Apollos being the author is accepted, amongst recent English commentators by Dean Alford and Canon Farrar. The Pauline authorship is maintained by Bishop Wordsworth, and by Dr. Kay, in the *Speaker's Commentary*. Archdeacon Norris, whilst apparently rejecting the Pauline authorship, regards the question as unsolved.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xiii. 24.



that the Epistle was written in Italy, and if so, from Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The Epistle was written evidently before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 72, for the Temple and Jewish ritual are spoken of in the present, and not in the past, tense ; and it is inconceivable but that had that great event happened, it would have been mentioned, affording as it would have done such a convincing proof of the truth of the Epistle's argument. At the same time it was probably not written long before, for the coming judgment upon the Hebrew nation was already giving signs of its approach.<sup>2</sup>

- The times, too, were those of danger and difficulty, involving the persons addressed in danger of apostasy, and of neglecting the means of grace. They had passed through such times before.<sup>3</sup> These allusions refer, most probably, to the persecution of the Jerusalem Christians in A.D. 62,<sup>4</sup> when James the Just suffered martyrdom, and to the threatening of the Holy City itself by the Roman armies, recovering from their defeat by the Jewish patriots in A.D. 66.

Yet if the Epistle is to be assigned to some friend of the Apostle Paul, it would almost certainly have contained some reference to his death, had it already taken place.

On the whole, therefore, we may, with fair certainty, date the Epistle in the year A.D. 67, or perhaps early in A.D. 68.

**To whom written.** The inscription, " To the Hebrews," would, at first sight, suggest that the Epistle was intended for the whole body of Jewish Christians,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 25, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. vi. 4-10, x. 23-39.

<sup>4</sup> Synchronizing with St. Paul's first imprisonment (Heb. x. 34).



wherever they might be. But the special messages at the close, as well as distinct references to local circumstances, scattered up and down the Epistle, show that it was intended for some one body of Hebrew Christians in some particular place or city.<sup>1</sup> Who these were has been much disputed. Some have thought that the Hebrew Christians of the Corinthian Church were addressed ;<sup>2</sup> some, those of Alexandria ; and others again, those at Rome. The ancient tradition, however, is that it was addressed to the Christians of Palestine, and especially to those of Jerusalem, or perhaps to the same Christians, when, seeing "Jerusalem encompassed with armies," they had retired, in obedience to the Lord's directions, to the City of Pella on the east of Jordan. The tone of the Epistle, assuming, as it does, such an intimate acquaintance with the Jewish ritual, strongly favours this traditional view, and especially that form of it which leans to the Jerusalem Christians after they had retired to Pella. It may therefore be adopted as, in all probability, correct.

**Canonical Authority.** The right of the Epistle to be regarded as a portion of the inspired Scriptures has been recognized from the earliest times. It is largely used and quoted from by Christian writers of the first and second centuries, and was constantly read in the daily services of the early Church.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

The Epistle may be divided into two main divisions :—

- I. Doctrinal. i.-x. 18.
- II. Hortatory. x. 19-xiii. 25.

<sup>1</sup> See for *e.g.* Heb. v. 11, 12, vi. 9-12, x. 23-25, 32-35, xii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Excluded, however, by Heb. ii. 3.



They may be subdivided thus :—

I. 1. The general theme of the Epistle : the Gospel is God's final revelation to man. i. 1-4.

2. Comparison between the Two Covenants. i. 5-x. 18.

(a) *In regard to the ministers of each* (i. 5-viii. 6).

Christ infinitely superior to Angels (i. 5-ii. 18).

Moses (iii. 1-19).

Joshua (iv. 1-16).

Christ is our Priest, possessing every qualification (v. 1-10).

The thought pressed home in a parenthesis (v. 11-vi. 20).

Christ's High Priesthood is superior to that of Aaron, for many reasons : it is after the order of Melchizedek (vii. 1-viii. 6).

(b) *In regard to the results of each* (viii. 7-x. 18).

The first *faulty*, the second *perfect* (viii. 7-13).

The Tabernacle and its services only figures of better things to come, of which Christ is the High Priest (ix-x. 18).

II. 1. Exhortation to steadfastness. x. 19-39.

2. Enforced by reference to remarkable instances of faith manifested by works under difficulties. xi.

3. Renewed exhortation, in which a contrast is again drawn between the two Covenants. xii. 1-28.

4. Final directions, with one more allusion to the Old Covenant (10-15), and affectionate conclusion. xiii. 1-25.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS LXV., LXVI.

### ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES, GROUPED ACCORDING TO DATE.

- I. Epistles of the Second Missionary Journey.
  1. First Thessalonians from Corinth. Autumn A.D. 52.
  2. Second Thessalonians from Corinth. Spring or Summer A.D. 53.
- II. Epistles of the Third Missionary Journey.
  3. First Corinthians, from Ephesus. Spring A.D. 57.
  4. Second Corinthians, from Philippi. Autumn A.D. 57.
  5. Galatians, from Corinth. Winter A.D. 57-58.
  6. Romans, from Corinth. Spring A.D. 58.
- III. Epistles of the First Roman Imprisonment.
  7. Philippians, from Rome. Early (?) A.D. 62.
  8. Ephesians, „ „ Later (?) A.D. 62.
  9. Colossians, „ „ „ „
  10. Philemon, „ „ „ „
- IV. Epistles of the last year of the Apostle's life.
  11. Titus, from Corinth. Early A.D. 67.
  12. First Timothy, from Nicopolis. Later A.D. 67.
  13. Second Timothy, from Rome. A.D. 68.
  14. The Epistle to the Hebrews, if St. Paul's, may be assigned to A.D. 67 or 68.



## *CHAPTER LXVII.*

### **The General Epistles, with the Second and Third Epistles of St. John.**

**T**HERE are five Epistles which are called “Catholic,” or “General,” as not being addressed to any particular Church or Churches. These are the Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, the first of St. John, and St. Jude. This chapter will be devoted to a short account of these Epistles, together with the second and third Epistles of St. John.

#### **Epistle General of St. James.**

**Authorship.** The writer styles himself simply, “James the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This implies that the Epistle was written by some one well known to the Church.

That the writer was a Jew of Palestine may be inferred from his reference to the products of that country—its oil, figs and vines ; to its bitter waters ;<sup>1</sup> to its former and its latter rain,<sup>2</sup> and the burning heat of its sun.<sup>3</sup> The same is suggested by the opening

<sup>1</sup> Jas. iii. 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Jas. v. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jas. i. 11, A.V. Cf. Matt. xx. 12. Some prefer R.V. “the sun ariseth with the scorching [east] wind,” and compare Job xxvii. 21, LXX., and John iv. 8, LXX.



address, such as one resident in Judæa might make to his brethren scattered through the Roman empire.

That the writer had also been an attentive listener to the teaching of Jesus Christ is evident from the manner in which that teaching permeates the whole Epistle. Our thoughts, as we read, are carried back once and again to the Sermon on the Mount.

We conclude therefore that the author was one of the persons of the name of James mentioned in the Gospels or Acts.

James the son of Zebedee is excluded, because of his early martyrdom,<sup>1</sup> which happened about eleven or twelve years after the Ascension, long before this Epistle could have been written. The Epistle assumes that the Gospel had been widely spread amongst the Jews of the Dispersion, and that the name of "Christian" had already become general.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of James the son of Zebedee, the Lord's brother of the same name was the most prominent James amongst the early Christians. He was recognized as the head of the Jerusalem Church. In this position of high authority, he presided over the great Council of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 51. St. Paul mentions him, as an Apostle, at the time of his own first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.<sup>3</sup>

Fourteen years later, St. Paul mentions him as one of the "pillars" of the Church.<sup>4</sup> St. Peter desired that his release from prison should be announced to James,<sup>5</sup> and it was to James that St. Paul reported himself on his arrival at Jerusalem at the close of his third great journey. St. James, on this occasion, took upon himself to offer advice to St. Paul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jas. i. 1, ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 19. About A.D. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. ii. 9. About A.D. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xii. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Acts xxi. 18-26.



To this James, the Epistle bearing his name has always been ascribed.

Two questions have been much debated. (1) What are we to understand by the expression, "The Lord's brother?" and (2) was he one of the Twelve Apostles?

(i.) The expression "The Lord's brother," has been interpreted to mean (a) A son of a sister of the Virgin Mary; (b) A son of Joseph and the Blessed Virgin; (c) A son of Joseph by a former marriage. Of these the last is much to be preferred, and may, on the whole, be regarded as the true explanation.<sup>1</sup>

(ii.) Was James, the Lord's brother, one of the twelve Apostles?

St. John tells us that six months before the Lord's crucifixion, His brethren did not believe in Him.<sup>2</sup>

Though the resurrection seems to have made them believers,<sup>3</sup> yet St. Luke carefully distinguishes them from the Twelve.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, St. Paul calls James an Apostle, telling us that on the occasion of his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, beside Peter, "other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."<sup>5</sup> But then St. Paul and St. Barnabas were both of them called Apostles, though neither of them of the Twelve. And the title seems also to have been extended to Silas (Silvanus).<sup>6</sup> St. Paul also appears to distinguish between James and the Twelve in 1 Cor. xv. 5, 7.

It seems best, therefore, to suppose that James the Lord's brother was not one of the Twelve, but that the well known sanctity of his character, his near connection with the Lord, and the esteem in which,

<sup>1</sup> See, further, p. 128, Note A. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 5.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Acts i. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. i. 19.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 6.



as we know, he was held by the unbelieving Jews of Jerusalem, made his recognition as the head of the Church in the Holy City at once natural and fitting.<sup>1</sup>

**Time of Writing.** St. James perished in the great persecution of A.D. 62. His Epistle was written probably not long before, as a result perhaps of St. Paul's report of his ministry in "foreign parts," given in A.D. 58.

**To whom addressed.** These are "the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad," *i.e.* to the Hebrew Christians living in the various cities and towns of the Roman Empire, and in other parts of the world.

#### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Introductory greeting. i. 1.
- II. The true view of temptation. i. 2-15.
- III. Difference between hearing and doing. i. 16-27.
- IV. True faith shown by its works ; especially works of self denying love. ii. 1-26.
- V. The government of the tongue, difficult, but necessary, issuing in peace. iii. 1-18.
- VI. Selfishness and spiritual pride, the cause of hatings and quarrels. iv. 1-17.
- VII. Exhortation to a high-toned life of active faith. v. 1-20.

### **The First Epistle of St. Peter.**

**Authorship.** There has never been any reasonable doubt but that the author of this Epistle was the Apostle St. Peter. It is quoted by Christian writers

<sup>1</sup> If he were one of the Twelve, he would have to be identified with James, the son of Alphæus ; an identification full of difficulties. The Twelve, moreover, were under an obligation to leave Jerusalem, "to preach the Gospel to every creature." One who was not of their number would be under no such obligation.



at the close of the first century, and St. Peter is mentioned by name, as its author, by others, early in the second century. The Epistle itself bears abundant evidence of the influence of our Lord's teaching and example upon St. Peter, whilst its chastened tone seems to suggest to us the result of long years of ministerial work upon the once eager and impetuous, though loving disciple.

**To whom addressed.** The persons to whom St. Peter wrote were Jewish Christians dwelling amongst the Gentiles in five of the provinces of that portion of the Roman empire which we now call Asia Minor. Many of these had probably been converted by St. Paul, when on his missionary journeys. We have, however, no work in Pontus or Bithynia recorded of that Apostle. It has been thought probable that the Gospel was preached in those provinces during St. Paul's lengthened stay at Ephesus, by some of his companions in travel.

The nature of St. Peter's connection with these Jewish Christians of Asia Minor is entirely a matter of conjecture. It was, however, not improbably, of a personal character. St. Paul records an agreement made between himself, and "James, Cephas (Peter) and John," that he "should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." That this was not intended to restrict the elder Apostles to Judæa seems evident, not only from the early traditions of the Church, but from the fact that we have a visit of St. Peter to Antioch mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>1</sup> He may very well have then been on a missionary tour to his own countrymen in the various districts of Asia Minor. The many expres-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 11.



sions in this first Epistle resembling others in the Epistles of St. Paul suggest also the possibility that St. Peter visited these districts after those Epistles were written, and had become widely circulated.<sup>1</sup>

**Place and Time of Writing.** In the concluding salutations, St. Peter dates his Epistle from Babylon. It has been very widely supposed that this is a mystical expression for Rome, just as St. John in the Revelation speaks of the Roman empire under the same name. But that St. Peter should adopt such a method of speech in the closing words of an Epistle, without apparently any kind of necessity, is, to say the least, highly improbable. On the other hand, we may think of it as extremely likely that in the course of a widely extended missionary journey St. Peter should visit that part of the ancient world, where there was still a large Jewish population.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming then that the ruined, but still existing, city of Babylon is intended, it would appear that Silvanus, the Silas of the Acts, had recently brought him news of the Churches of Asia Minor, and that the Apostle was availing himself of the return of Silvanus to send a letter to his brethren, the Jewish Christians of those parts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *e.g.* 1 Pet. i. 3 and Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. ii. 6-10 and Rom. ix. 25, 33; 1 Pet. ii. 18; Eph. vi. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 1 and Eph. v. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 22 and Eph. i. 21, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 Pet. v. 13, the words "Church that is" are not in the original, according to nearly all the manuscripts. We may render "The co-elect at Babylon," and, remembering that the word is feminine and in the singular, think with some that St. Peter's wife is intended, the faithful companion, as it would seem (1 Cor. ix. 5), of his missionary labours.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12. The order in which the provinces are mentioned in chap. i. 1, suggests a person writing from the East rather than the West. That St. Peter should write from the literal Babylon in no way militates against the ancient tradition of the Church that he, as well as St. Paul, suffered Martyrdom at Rome, during the Neronian persecution, in A.D. 67 or 68.



Marcus, in whom we recognize the John Mark of the Acts, the intimate friend and companion of three Apostles, was with St. Peter at the time. Not long afterwards, he had rejoined Timothy,<sup>1</sup> and was on his way to Rome, whither, as is most likely, St. Peter was also travelling, either freely, or perhaps bound as a prisoner.

Silvanus had brought the news of a terrible persecution raging against the Christians. It was a "fiery trial;" but let them "cast all their care" upon God, and it would pass in due time, and its issue would be their being "perfected, stablished, strengthened, settled."<sup>2</sup> Thus the Apostle sent to them his word of comfort and consolation and encouragement. And as he wrote, there was ever present to his mind the example of His Divine Lord. That example he presses upon his brethren as the only right one to follow.

The time of this persecution was doubtless the reign of Nero, and we may therefore date the Epistle about the year A.D. 64.

### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Salutation. i. 1, 2.
- II. Blessedness of the Christian, even in times of trial.  
i. 3-12.
- III. Exhortation consequent upon this, with further statement of the Christian's privileges. i. 13-ii. 10.
- IV. The Christian's duties as a citizen, and in his home.  
ii. 11-iii. 7.
- V. Exhortations to unity, patience and holiness of life. iii. 8-iv. 11.
- VI. Encouragement to bear persecution bravely. iv. 12-19.
- VII. Exhortations to the different sections of the Church—to the elders—to the younger. v. 1-11.
- VIII. Conclusion. v. 12-14.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 12, 16, v. 7, 10.



## The Second Epistle of St. Peter.

**Authorship.** Unlike the first Epistle, the authenticity of this second Epistle was for a long time held to be doubtful, so that it was not until the Council of Laodiceæ, in A.D. 366, that it was formally admitted into the Canon of Scripture. There is no lack of evidence that the Epistle was widely known at an early date, although not generally recognized as St. Peter's. Perhaps the troublous time in which evidently it was written, and the character of its language, may have had much to do, at first, with its reception, or otherwise, as a true work of St. Peter.

But when we turn to the Epistle itself there is much to make us feel sure, in spite of certain differences, that it came from the same hand as the first Epistle.

We note, first of all, that the Apostle calls himself "Symeon," a rare form in the New Testament for the more usual "Simon,"<sup>1</sup> and one most unlikely to be used by a forger. The touching reference to the writer's presence at the Transfiguration, with the remarkable use of the words "tabernacle" and "decease" in close proximity to that reference, brings St. Peter irresistibly before us.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing the two Epistles, we find in each the same anticipation of the approach of the end of the world ;<sup>3</sup> in each the Flood is mentioned, and that with

<sup>1</sup> The form "Symeon," as the name of the Apostle, only occurs here and in Acts xv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 14, 17. Cf. Luke ix. 31, 33. In 2 Pet. i. 14 there seems to be an allusion to our Lord's prophecy of the Apostle's death in John xxi. 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5, iv. 7 ; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 10-14.



the special thought of the small number of persons saved;<sup>1</sup> in each we have reverential allusion to the Old Testament prophecies;<sup>2</sup> and in each there is a remarkable reference to the Divine excellencies, not found in any other New Testament writer.<sup>3</sup>

Other interesting comparisons may be made between expressions occurring in this Epistle and similar expressions in the speeches of St. Peter recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus the mention of the gift of faith in the Epistle,<sup>4</sup> and the use of the phrase "among the people,"<sup>5</sup> are seen to be in accordance with St. Peter's manner.

The differences in style between the first and second Epistles of St. Peter have been pressed by some against the Apostle's authorship of the latter. But with the striking resemblances we have noted, it may well be urged that any differences of style are due, not to difference of author, but to the altered circumstances under which the second Epistle was written. Danger and persecution from without were present and to be expected when the first Epistle was written; false doctrine was the special evil threatening the Church at the date of the second. Hence there naturally arose a variation in the matter and in the manner of writing.

On the whole we may conclude with much certainty that the judgment of the Church of the fourth century was right, and that in this Epistle, we have a genuine work of the Apostle St. Peter.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5, iii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10-12; 2 Pet. i. 19-21, iii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The word used in both passages means "virtue" (1 Pet. ii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 3, R.V.). It is a pity that it is not rendered by the same word "excellence" in both passages, as it is in the first of them, in R.V.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. i. 1; Acts xi. 17. Cf. also Acts i. 17.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. i. 1; Acts iii. 23, iv. 8, 10, x. 41, 42.



**To whom addressed.** The allusion in the third chapter to a former Epistle makes it evident that the same persons are addressed as in the first Epistle.<sup>1</sup>

**Place and Time of Writing.** Of these, nothing can, with any certainty, be said. The Apostle was evidently expecting his own death before long,<sup>2</sup> and was acquainted with many of St. Paul's Epistles.<sup>3</sup>

It is not improbable that by "them that hold the doctrine of Balaam," and "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," who are mentioned in the Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Pergamum, one and the same sect are intended.<sup>4</sup> If so the sect had obtained a name when the Apocalypse was written, which it had not done when St. Peter spoke of it in his second Epistle.<sup>5</sup> This would make for the earlier date of the Epistle. Whatever date may be assigned to the Apocalypse, it cannot well have been written until after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 72.<sup>6</sup>

Gathering these indications together, we may date this Epistle in the last year of St. Peter's life, and when perhaps he was already a prisoner. It may well have been written from Rome.

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. Salutation. i. 1, 2.
- II. Need of continual growth in Christian graces. To this he stirs them, reminding them of his warrant. i. 3-21.
- III. The rise of the false teachers to be expected: their character. ii. 1-22.
- IV. The certainty of the second coming of the Lord, and the need of preparation. iii. 1-17.
- V. Conclusion. iii. 18.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. ii. 14, 15.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> On the date of the Apocalypse, see p. 623.







**Place and Time of Writing.** These are quite uncertain. The absence of any formal opening is not only, it may be said, characteristic of St. John, but suggests also the thought, that the Epistle was written at Ephesus, and intended for the Christians of that city, and of the other cities of the proconsular province of Asia, for whom, as living amongst them, no special salutation would be necessary.

The time at which the Epistle was written has been much debated. Some have supposed that the words, "it is the last time,"<sup>1</sup> refer to the then approaching fall of Jerusalem. In support of this opinion it is urged that the "manifestation" and "coming" of the Lord spoken of in this Epistle<sup>2</sup> also refer to that event. The great discourse on the Mount of Olives regarding "the last things" had led the early Christians to connect their Lord's second coming with the destruction of the Holy City. It is thought by some that the absence of those two words in others of St. John's writings,<sup>3</sup> indicate their later date.

On the other hand, the opening verses of the Epistle look exceedingly like a summary of the Gospel. They may indeed, as the rest of the Epistle, be founded only on an oral teaching about Jesus Christ, which had not been as yet reduced to writing. But still, we cannot help feeling, as we read and compare the Gospel and Epistle together, that when the latter was written, the former was already in the hands of those for whom both were composed.

If, then, the Epistle was written *before* the Gospel, we should assign A.D. 70 as its approximate date; if *after* the Gospel, it must be dated some years nearer

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, R.V.

<sup>3</sup> The Gospel and the Apocalypse.



to the end of the first century, and quite at the close of St. John's life.

**Object of the Epistle.** This is undoubted. It is to set forth the true doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the place of much false teaching on this momentous subject then prevalent at Ephesus. "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is come in the flesh, and has shed His blood for us": this is St. John's teaching.<sup>1</sup> To deny this is to be without God.<sup>2</sup> And lest any should attempt to narrow the work of Jesus Christ, St. John insists that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Nor may we water down the heinousness of sin, or think that we have no sin. This would be to make God a liar, and to forget that "all unrighteousness is sin," and that "he that committed sin is of the devil."<sup>3</sup>

### Analysis of the Epistle.

- I. **St. John's Witness to the Incarnation.** i. 1-4.
- II. **God is Light.** i. 5-ii. 29.
  1. From this Light sin shuts us out, but, on our confession, Christ cleanses us by His blood, and pleads for us. i. 6-ii. 2.
  2. To have fellowship with the Light, there must be—
    - (a) Obedience. ii. 3-8.
    - (b) Brotherly love. ii. 9-11.
    - (c) Steadfastness in the Faith and righteousness. ii. 12-29.
- III. **God is Love.** iii. 1-iv. 21.
  1. Therefore, we are His sons. iii. 1, 2.
  2. So again we are called to—
    - (a) Obedience. iii. 3-10.
    - (b) Brotherly love. iii. 11-24 and iv. 7-21.
    - (c) Steadfastness in the Faith. iv. 1-6.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 7, iv. 2.    <sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 23.    <sup>3</sup> 1 John i. 8, ii. 2, iii. 8, v. 1.



IV. **Effect of belief in Jesus as the Christ.** v. 1-12,

1. Love to God and God's children, v. 1,
2. Obedience. v. 2, 3.
3. Victory over the world. v. 4-9.
4. Eternal life. v. 10-12.

V. **Conclusion.** v. 13-21.

1. Purpose of the Epistle. v. 13.
2. Encouragements to prayer. v. 14-17.
3. And to holiness of life. v. 18-21.

## The Second Epistle of St. John.

**Authorship.** The writer of this Epistle calls himself "The Elder." That St. John meant himself by this modest designation we may regard as certain.<sup>1</sup> Not only is the style of this short Epistle altogether like that of the first Epistle, but it may be regarded as a sort of *précis* of it. In the first Epistle, three thoughts are specially prominent :—

(a) The necessity of true belief in Jesus Christ, as the Incarnate Son of God.

(b) The duty of loving the brethren.

(c) The danger of transgressing God's commandments.

These same three thoughts compose the substance of this second Epistle, only they are compressed into the shortest form. Had this been the work of a forger, he would certainly have tried to gain credit for his words by describing them as the work of an Apostle, and not of a simple Presbyter or Elder.

**To whom addressed.** Three answers are made to this question. These answers are :—

(a) That the Epistle was written to the Church at large.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Pet, v. 1.



(b) That it was written to some particular Church.

(c) That it was written to an individual.

The first verse, in which the Apostle speaks of "all they that have known the truth" as loving the person or Church addressed, and the salutation in verse 13, certainly exclude the first answer. Between the second and third answers, it is impossible to decide. In favour of the second, the expression "look to yourselves,"<sup>1</sup> may perhaps be urged, as well as the similar use of the first "elect" in the first Epistle of St. Peter. That Epistle is addressed "to the strangers . . . elect according to the foreknowledge of God," etc., and concludes with a salutation, "The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you."

In support of the third answer we may perhaps urge the general tenor of the Epistle, its warnings as to clinging to the truth, and its rules as to hospitality. Those who thus regard the Epistle as a private letter to some lady friend of the Apostle and her family, hesitate as to whether we should translate, as in A.V., "to the elect lady," or "to the elect Kyria," regarding Kyria (or, lady) as a proper name. The absence of any tradition, as to who this lady was, has been thought to make against the third answer.

**Place and Time of Writing.** That the Epistle was written by St. John in his old age seems clear from the title of "The Elder," which he gives to himself. But whether he wrote from Ephesus, or from Patmos, or from some other place, is entirely uncertain.

### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

I. Introductory salutation. Vers. 1-3.

II. Reminder of the Commandment to love one another. 4, 5.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 8.



- III. Definition of love. 6.
- IV. The Doctrine of Christ, and danger of transgressing it. 7-9.
- V. Rules as to hospitality towards those who hold not the doctrine of Christ. 10, 11.
- VI. Conclusion. 12, 13.

## The Third Epistle of St. John.

**By whom written.** Doubtless the author of this short, and certainly private, letter was St. John, "the Elder," as he calls himself here, as in the second Epistle. The style of these few verses is entirely that of St. John.

**Occasion.** This was plainly the return of some messengers whom St. John had despatched to the Church of which Gaius<sup>1</sup> (or, Caius) was a member. Their coming had been the occasion of dispute in that Church. One of its leading members, Diotrephes, had refused to receive them, and carrying with him a large section of the Church, had excommunicated the messengers and those who had shown them brotherly hospitality. Amongst these latter were Gaius and Demetrius, who had received the strangers, and entertained them with "faithful" charity, and brought them on their way.

When the messengers returned to St. John, they reported the nature of their reception, and "testified of the truth" that was in Gaius. As an acknowledgment of his kindness, and in delight at the good account he had heard of him, St. John wrote this letter of thanks to Gaius.

<sup>1</sup> Possibly, but quite uncertainly, the Gaius of Corinth, mentioned in Rom. xvi. 23. The name was a common one. The known dissensions of the Corinthian Church may, however, suggest the identity.



**Place and Time of Writing.** Probably Ephesus, after the Apostle's return from Patmos.

### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Salutation and thanks for the hospitality shown to the messengers. Vers. 1-8.
- II. Stern, severe message to Diotrephes. 9-11.
- III. Kindly reference to Demetrius. 12.
- IV. Conclusion. 13, 14.

### **The Epistle General of St. Jude.**

**Authorship.** The writer calls himself "The Brother of James." This James, so well known as to require no other designation, must have been "James, the Lord's brother," first Bishop of the Jerusalem Church. St. Jude therefore would be the Judas mentioned by St. Matthew, as one of the four "Brethren of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> These brethren, sons, as seems most likely, of Joseph by an earlier marriage, were not of the number of the Twelve Apostles, from whom indeed St. Luke carefully severs them.<sup>2</sup> It is probable, however, that in the subsequent wider use of the title apostle, it was extended to them, as to St. Paul and St. Barnabas.<sup>3</sup>

In the Epistle itself, St. Jude very clearly indicates that he was not of the number of the Twelve.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 19.

<sup>4</sup> See ver. 17. The idea that the two brothers, St. James and St. Jude, were of the Twelve, as well as brethren of the Lord, receives countenance from the A.V. of Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13. But literally, the words are simply "Judas of James," which in accordance with ordinary usage, ought to be rendered, "Judas *the son of* James." The R.V. has adopted this rendering. Tyndale (1534) has "Judas James sonne." Wycliffe (1380) and the Rheims Version (1552) have simply, "Judas of



**Place and Time of Writing.** The allusion to the Book of Enoch, and the general style and tenor of the Epistle, suggest that it was written in Palestine, and to Hebrew Christians. The reference to what the Apostles used to say<sup>1</sup> implies perhaps a date after the majority of them were dead. But not of necessity. For the writer, being left in Jerusalem probably with his brother James, when the Apostles were scattered, as evidently they were, preaching the Gospel,<sup>2</sup> might well support what he wished to say by the authority of those teachers to whom the whole Church was accustomed to render, not deference only, but obedience.

A late date for the Epistle is, however, suggested by ver. 18. It is clearly a reference to 2 Pet. iii. 3. St. Peter there speaks of expecting the rise of "scoffers" in the last days. St. Jude, using the same Greek word,<sup>3</sup> speaks of them as already arisen. Dating the second Epistle of St. Peter about A.D. 67 or 68, we may therefore place that of St. Jude somewhat later. But whether before or after the Fall of Jerusalem is quite uncertain. The rise of the "scoffers" would suggest perhaps some time *after* that event.

**The Book of Enoch.** St. Jude makes a quotation from this book, which was doubtless well known to him, as to others of the early Christian writers. It is an apocryphal book, full of strange legends, and written about the second century B.C. Though quoted from in early extant authors, the book itself was lost

James." The Geneva Version (1557) has "Judas James *brother*." In Luke vi. 16 Cranmer (1539) has "Judas James sonne," but in Acts i. 13 "Judas the brother of James."

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Only found in New Testament in these two places. In Jude 18 A.V. translates "mockers"; R.V. uses "mockers" in both places,



for about 1400 years. Three copies of it, in an Aethiopic version, were found about 100 years ago in Abyssinia. It has since been published in English and in German.

### **Analysis of the Epistle.**

- I. Salutation. Vers. 1, 2.
- II. Earnest caution against false teachers, illustrated by the cases of the Israelites during the Exodus, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Korah, and Balaam.<sup>1</sup> 3-11.
- III. Description of these false teachers. 12-16.
- IV. Whose advent they had been led to expect. 17, 18.
- V. Exhortation to faith and prayer, and to care for others' salvation. 19-23.
- VI. Conclusion. 24, 25.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion in ver. 9 to St. Michael and Moses, is from an apocryphal book, no longer extant, on "The Ascension of Moses."



## *CHAPTER LXVIII.*

### **The Revelation of St. John the Divine.**

**The Name of the Book.** That which wraps the unseen world from our sight, whilst we are "in the body," is often spoken of as "the veil," and we use the expression, "being within the veil" of a person who has departed this life. The idea is taken from the veil, which in the Tabernacle, and Temple, at Jerusalem, separated the "holy place" from the "holy of holies." These things were "figures of the true," and hence, when our Blessed Lord ascended into heaven, He is said to have "entered within the veil."<sup>1</sup>

It has been permitted to one or two of God's servants to have this veil withdrawn for a brief moment, so that, whilst still in the body, they have seen and heard something of what is passing within. St. Paul speaks of himself as being thus "caught up," and as hearing "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."<sup>2</sup> The same privilege was accorded to St. John, who describes himself as being, during this withdrawing of the veil, "in the Spirit." But whilst St. Paul might not tell what he heard, it was

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vi. 20, ix. 3, 24.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.



commanded to St. John to "write the things which thou hast seen."<sup>1</sup> The book in which the Apostle has recorded what he saw is called The Apocalypse, or Revelation, or in other words, "The Book of the Unveiling."

**Authorship.** The writer of this Book claims to be the John, who, as their "brother and companion in tribulation," was well known to the Churches of Asia. This was undoubtedly the Apostle St. John, whose authorship is clearly affirmed by the earliest Christian writers of the second century. And when we turn to the Book itself, we seem at once to be reading the work of one with whom we have already become familiar in his Gospel and Epistles. There is less perhaps of the calm measured tone, which distinguishes St. John's Gospel and his Epistles, in the Apocalypse, which is also more thoroughly Hebraistic in style and thought than they are. But these things are easily accounted for in a work written, as the Revelation was, at the moment,<sup>2</sup> under intense spiritual excitement, with the obligation of writing as rapidly as possible, in a language which, though a familiar one, was not the writer's mother tongue. The same words and expressions which, in all the New Testament, we have found only in St. John's writings, we meet with again in this Book. We note the titles of our Lord, "The Word" and "The Lamb of God."<sup>3</sup> The "hidden manna" of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. i. 10, 19. We may compare the Visions of Isaiah (vi. 1-13), and Ezekiel (i. 1-28), and of St. Stephen, a little before his death (Acts vii. 55).

<sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 19, x. 4. There would also, naturally, be an unwillingness to make any revision of the Book, after the solemn warning contained in the last chapter (xxii. 18, 19).

<sup>3</sup> John i. 1, 14; Rev. xix. 13; John i. 29, 36. Cf. Rev. v. 6, 12, xiii. 8. In the Apocalypse, however, St. John uses the diminutive for "lamb."



the Epistle to the Angel of the Church at Pergamum reminds us of the discourse in St. John vi.,<sup>1</sup> "the River of the Water of Life" tells us of Him Who spoke to the Samaritan woman of His gift of Living Water.<sup>2</sup> We remember, too, the frequent recurrence in this Book, as in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, of the thought of overcoming and of victory, and its consequences.<sup>3</sup> Only in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse do we find any reference to the piercing of the side of Jesus Christ, and its being noted as a fulfilment of prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

**Place and Time of Writing.** The constant tradition of the early Church, attested by the earliest Christian writers after the Apostles, is that St. John spent the later years of his life at Ephesus. From this city he was banished, for a time, in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, and exiled to Patmos, a small island lying off the south-west coast of Asia Minor. After the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus, and died there not long afterwards. The vision recorded in the Apocalypse was seen at Patmos, and the account of it at once written down.<sup>5</sup>

We may date therefore the writing of the Book about the year A.D. 95 or 96.

Some have preferred a date twenty-five or thirty years earlier. But the general persecution of the Christians presupposed in this Book, had not then taken place. The persecution under Nero was con-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 1; John iv. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, iii. 5, 12, 21, xii. 11, xv. 2, xvii. 14, xxi. 7. Cf. John xvi. 33; 1 John ii. 13, 14, iv. 4, v. 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> John xix. 34, 37; Rev. i. 7; Zech. xii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. 1, 19, x. 4. Possibly, the first nine verses were prefixed later, by St. John, after his return to Ephesus. Cf. ver. 9.



finied nearly to Rome. Laodicæa was destroyed by earthquake in A.D. 64, and must have taken some ten or twenty years to recover herself. Ephesus, at the earlier date, when the ministrations of St. Paul there had been so recent, could scarcely have "left her first love."

And had the Lord's words on Olivet about the destruction of Jerusalem been still unfulfilled, what need to comfort the heart of the Christian Church, and to spiritualize the hopes of its members by the vision of the New Jerusalem? The city indeed, and the world-power which fill the Apostle's vision are not those of Jerusalem and her unbelieving rulers, but of Rome and her great empire.

**To whom addressed.** St. John distinctly addresses his Book to "the seven Churches which are in Asia." Why these seven were selected, when there were almost certainly other Churches in proconsular Asia, we cannot tell.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient to remember that the number seven is representative, that these seven Churches therefore are representatives of the whole Church, and that it is for the whole Church, in all ages, that the Book was really intended.<sup>2</sup>

**Object of the Book.** Clearly the Book was written at a time of present, or recent, persecution, when the Christian Church was depressed and down-cast. The purpose of the Book therefore is consolatory,

<sup>1</sup> After St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, the cities of Colossæ and Hierapolis were destroyed by earthquake. But they, like Laodicæa, may have been restored, when St. John wrote the Apocalypse.

<sup>2</sup> "We see in the Seven Churches of Asia, not only literal Churches existing in St. John's own day, but also examples of different conditions of the Church Catholic throughout all future time."—Dr. LEE in *Speaker's Commentary*.



assuring God's servants, depressed by trial and difficulty, of the final triumph of their Divine Lord. This assurance is conveyed by prophetic visions, to the narration of which the larger part of the Book is devoted. Yet these visions, conveying courage and hope to the Christian Church, are not intended to enable us to read the future. Only, when all is fulfilled, shall we be able to see the special meaning of each vision.

**Systems of Interpretation.** A great many commentaries have been written on this Book, the commentators differing much amongst themselves as to its meaning. They may, however, be divided into four classes :—

1. *The Preterist*, who regard the Book as applying only to the earlier ages of the Church, in its conflicts with the Jewish and Roman polities.

2. *The Historical, or Continuous.* Commentators of this class consider that the prophetic visions run parallel to the history of the Church. This class includes the greater number of commentators, but they differ widely from one another in the application of their principle.

3. *The Futurist.* This class considers that "the prophecies of this book" are awaiting their fulfilment, which will take place at the time of the Second Advent of Christ.

4. *The Spiritual;* as it is called. According to this system, "each one of the several *series* of visions, spans the whole time between the First and Second Advent."

**The Symbolism of the Book.** This is a very difficult subject. The symbolism employed is almost exclusively Jewish, the only exception perhaps being



the use made of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.<sup>1</sup> Reference to other books of Holy Scripture will sometimes supply us with interpretations. Thus Isaiah teaches us that "the seven spirits which are before His throne" are really representative of the Holy Ghost in His sevenfold operation.<sup>2</sup> Again, the words of John the Baptist and of St. Paul explain to us that by "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," we are to understand the Church.<sup>3</sup>

The *numerical* symbolism calls for a brief word of explanation.

The number *Two* is the symbol of truth and certainty.<sup>4</sup>

*Three* is the symbol of God, the Creator.

*Four* is the symbol of Creation, as the four winds, the city lying four-square.

*Six* is the symbol of work and labour.

*Seven* represents the union between God and Man, and is therefore the number of perfection, peace and love. We have the seven Churches, the seven angels, the seven candlesticks, and many other applications of seven.

*The half of seven* is the symbol of imperfection, of trouble and persecution.<sup>5</sup>

*Ten* again represents perfection, but rather as applied to natural and worldly things. The ten days' persecution of the Church by the world is an example of this.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 4, iii. 1, iv. 5, v. 6; Isa. xi. 2. Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 29; Eph. v. 31, 32; Rev. xxi. 9. Cf. Isa. liv. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xi. 3. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 15; Deut. xvii. 6; Zech. iv. 3; John viii. 17.

<sup>5</sup> See especially Rev. xi-xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. ii. 10. The number *ten* enters very largely into the symbolism of the Old Testament: Gen. xiv. 20; Lev. xxvii. 30; Deut. xxiii. 3 (cf. Neh. xiii. 1); Dan. vii. 7, 24.



So the cube of ten, or one thousand, represents indefinite perfection and completion.<sup>1</sup>

*The half of ten, or five*, in like manner, represents incompleteness, and imperfection of a certain kind.<sup>2</sup>

*Twelve*, as the multiple of *Three* and *Four*, is the symbol of the Church, which, taken out of the world, is the Bride of Christ, and her members children of God. Thus we have  $12 \times 2 = 24$  elders; 12 fruits;  $12 \times 12 \times 1000$  the number of the sealed. And perhaps, *Six*, as the half of twelve, may be taken to represent the enemy of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

**The Millennium**, or, the reign of Christ for a thousand years.<sup>4</sup> The gross material notions regarding a literal thousand years' reign of the saints with Christ on the earth before the general resurrection, which were prevalent in the third and sixteenth centuries, and still linger amongst us, make a word or two on this subject desirable. Such notions indeed are entirely foreign to this Book, for its language is symbolic and not literal. We have already seen that the cube of ten represents, in the Bible, indefinite perfection and completion. Therefore the time of the saints' reign with Christ is to be understood of "a plenitude of time, known definitely to God."

The reign of Christ began with His victory over Satan, and His ascension into heaven, and His session at the right hand of God. This present reign of Christ St. John calls "The First Resurrection." In it, the souls of all the faithful departed are allowed to share, "being raised to a higher life with Christ in Paradise."

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 2-5. Cf. Psalms. xc. 4, cv. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 8; Rev. v. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ix. 5, x. xvii. 10. Cf. Matt. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Especially when thrice repeated (Rev. xiii. 18).

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xx. 2-5.



Of this blessed condition St. Paul was probably thinking when he wrote of "being absent from the body," and "present with the Lord."<sup>1</sup> And in a sense, Christ's Church, militant here on earth, is already reigning with Christ, and every faithful member is partaking in that reign, for as St. Paul says again, "to me, to live is Christ."<sup>2</sup>

### Analysis of the Apocalypse.

- I. **Introductory.** i.-iii.
  1. Vision of the Lord in glory. i.
  2. Epistles to the Seven Churches. ii.-iii.
- II. **Vision of the Seven Seals.** iv.-viii. 1.
  1. The Vision of the throne of God. iv. 1-11.
  2. The Vision of the Lamb taking the sealed book. v. 1-14.
  3. The Vision of the opening of the seals. vi.-viii. 1, with two scenes between the sixth and seventh seals—
    - (a) The sealing of the elect. vii. 1-8.
    - (b) The sealing of the great multitude. vii. 9-17.
- III. **Vision of the Seven Trumpets.** viii. 2-xi. 19, with two scenes between the sixth and seventh trumpets—
  - (a) The little book. x. 1-11.
  - (b) The two witnesses. xi. 1-14.
- IV. **Vision of the Church and her three Enemies.** xii.-xiv.
  1. First enemy, The Dragon. xii. 3-17.
  2. Second enemy, The Beast from the sea. xiii. 1-10.
  3. Third enemy, The Beast from the earth. xiii. 11-18. with
  4. Visions of blessedness and of judgment. xiv.
- V. **Vision of the Seven Vials.** xv. 1-xvi. 21, with a scene between the sixth and seventh vials—
  - (a) The gathering to battle at Ar-mageddon. xvi. 13-16.
- VI. **Vision of final triumph.** xvii. 1-xxii. 21.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 9. Cf. Phil. i. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 21.



1. The fall of Babylon—the world-power. xvii. 1–xix. 10.
2. The defeat of Satan—the spiritual power. xix. 11–xx. 10.
3. The Judgment. xx. 11–15.
4. The New Jerusalem. xxi.–xxii. 5.
- VII. Conclusion. xxii. 6–21.
  1. The blessedness of doing God's commandments. xxii. 6–15.
  2. The danger of adding to or subtracting from the Book. xxii. 16–20.
  3. Farewell prayer. xxii. 21.







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